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# LEGACY OF GURU NANAK DEV JI

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Edited By :

Dr. Inderjit Kaur



*10.9.20*

**IF UNDELIVERED RETURN TO:-  
ALL INDIA PINGALWARA CHARITABLE SOCIETY (R)  
G. T. ROAD, AMRITSAR - 143 001  
PUNJAB - INDIA**

Publisher:

Dr. Inderjit Kaur

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## Preface

According to Guru Nanak Dev ji in Maru Rag creator of this cosmos is divine. He is there since endless eons, "There was only darkness. There was no earth, no sky; there was only infinite command of His Hukam. There was no day or night no moon, no Sun; God sat in primal profound Samadhi. He did not possess any physical body. He was in Nirgun Swaroop. Watching the bad conditions, pollute atmosphere and behaviour of corrupt human being, He himself adopted physical body and descended on earth according to Mathura Bhatt, "The Embodiment of light the Lord himself is called Guru Nanak"

ਜੋਤਿ ਰੂਪਿ ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਾਯਉ ॥

According to Keerat Bhatt, "The Lord himself wielded his power and entered the world, The Formless Lord took form and with His Light He illuminated the realms of the world. He is All-pervading everywhere; the Lamp of the Shabad the Word, has been lit whoever gathers in the essence of the teachings shall be absorbed in the Feet of the Lord. Lehnaa, who became Guru Angad, and Guru Amardas, have been reincarnated into the pure house of Guru Nanak.

According to Bhai Gurdas ji, "Narayan, the Lord of the destitute assuming forms has established mastery overall."

ਨਾਰਾਇਣ ਨਿਜ ਰੂਪੁ ਧਰਿ ਨਾਥਾ ਨਾਥ ਸਨਾਥ ਕਰਾਇਆ ।

Guru Nanak Dev spent most of his time in meditation at the edge of Vein River. He eloped for three days, while meditating. When He appeared after three days He started reciting Mool-Mantar.

ੴ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ  
ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

The Absolute cum Sargun being.

His Name is Sat.

He is the Creator Person. ✕

He is above fear & enmity.

He is the Timeless Person. ✕ Lord

He is the unborn & Self existent Lord.

He is realisable through the Guru's Grace.

Guru Nanak illumined the minds of people that there is only one Divine power in the cosmos and with His Hukam life is throbbing in his creation. There is no Brahma, Vishnu & Mahesh. There should be no disintegration among the people rather they should be integrated.

Divine Power is beyond one's reach, that cannot be explained & all powerful and omnipresent.

Guru Nanak Dev ji praised Divine power in Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Bilawal Rag.

O Lord, inaccessible, to unfathomable, invisible and infinite; please take care of one. In the water, on the Land and in sky, You are totally providing Your Light in reach of every heart.

ਅਗਮ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਅਲਖ ਅਪਾਰਾ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਹਮਾਰੀ ॥

ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਭਰਿਪੁਰਿ ਲੀਣਾ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀ ॥

(ਅੰਗ ੭੯੫)

Guru Nanak Dev was incarnation of humility, compassion and Love. He himself explains in Siri Rag

Nanak seeks the company of the lowest of the low class, the very lowest of the low why should he try to compete with the high.

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸੁ ॥

(ਅੰਗ ੧੫)

Guru Nanak illuminated the minds of people against the superstitions practised by the people in those times, to the extent that many scientists were given death punishment by the so called religious people. There was lot of discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, faith and nationality. Guru Nanak exposed the hypocrisy of the promoters of the religion and pious pretenders. دوايت

In this book '*Legacy of Guru Nanak*' many learned writers, on the eve of 550th Guru Nanak's birthday wrote heart touching and enlightening articles depicting Legacy of Guru Nanak.

According to Dr. Manmohan Singh, Ex. P.M of India. "The basic message of Guru Nanak is equity and equality. Therefore, equitable distribution of income and wealth is an integral part of teachings of Sikh Gurus. Guru Nanak lived for the poor and shared his earnings, But world is becoming increasingly selfish."

For this Guru Nanak Dev Ji not only preached :

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥

Earn by hard Labour, Always Remember Almighty and Distribute your earnings among the poor but He also practised. He did menial jobs at home and then did job in Sultanpur and did farming at Kartarpur with that earning He started Langar.

Guru Ji further said that "Inter-faith dialogue is the best solution to religious fundamentalism." Bhupinder Singh Kohli's belief is like this "Sikhs believe that peace of mind and a state of equipoise attained by performing noble deeds and controlling worldly desires leads to heavenly life here on this earth. Whereas forgetting the creator and excessive indulgence in lust, anger, attachment, ego and greed bring misery and despair which amount to living in Hell."

According to Sardarni Kulbir kaur, "The spiritual path revealed by Nanak ji was not the lonely path of an ascetic who has renounced the world, the path of salvation on the contrary combines meditation in the form of Nam, The Divine Word the Shabad while fulfilling the responsibilities of the everyday life."

ਸੋ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਬੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥

ਰਾਜਿ ਰੰਗੁ ਮਾਲਿ ਰੰਗੁ ॥

ਰੰਗਿ ਰਤਾ ਨਚੈ ਨੰਗੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਠਗਿਆ ਮੁਠਾ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਵਿਣੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਗਇਆ ਗਵਾਇ ॥

(ਅੰਗ ੧੪੨)

They alone are truly alive, whose minds are filled with the Lord. O Nanak, no one else is truly alive. Those who merely live shall depart in dishonor, everything they eat is impure, Intoxicated with power and thrilled with wealth, they delight in the pleasures, and dance about shamelessly. O Nanak they are deluded and defrauded without the Lord's name. They lose their honor and depart.

When the people of India who were deprived of the virtue and only believed in reciting mantras, heard Babar's invasion, millions of the so called holy men failed to check his advance. Mugals did atrocities but no Mugal became blind and wrought any miracle. God alone bestows greatness or awards punishment as it pleases Him. Remembering God beforehand could obviate punishment.



Death is of two types. One is on the physical plane and other is on spiritual plane. Human life on the physical plane is impermanent. It is the only in the spiritual plane and under His shelter, that is fructifies and is made whole and permanent, otherwise it is subject to ravages of time, as other life is.

Guru Nanak shows the path of spiritual life in Siri Rag.

“ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਸੋ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ ॥”

“One who through the Guru’s word becomes dead to the self (ego) becomes deathless i.e. is dies no more.”

According to eminent Sikh scholar S. Narain Singh ji, “One must come back to the path of self-effacement i.e. the effacement of the lower-self, so as to fulfill one self. It is only after one learns to die. This self that one attunes to the Lord, and this becomes Deathless with Him. Thus, out of a certain death (death to the self) springs life and out of this life may spring the holy urge to suffer and even die, for truth and righteousness.

Guru Nanak believed “Truth is higher than everything but higher still is Truthful living”.

True knowledge is very important which can be obtained from the schools. Schools should be attached to religious places like Gurdwaras, Temples and Mosques. Guru explains, “Vidaya Vichari tan Parupkari”; contemplate and reflect upon knowledge, and you will become a benefactor to others.

Kuldip Singh Dheer a scientist and Sikh scholar’s article is very amazing. Guru Nanak Dev ji’s explanation of nature as an ecstasy. Guru Nanak asserts that it is not possible to fathom the frontiers of the Universe because

there are myriads of earths, skies, stars and galaxies.

ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਅਸੰਖ ਮੈ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

ਤੂ ਕਰਤਾ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਤੁਧੁ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਤੁਧੈ ਗੋਈ ॥

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ॥

There are countless worlds and nether regions; I cannot calculate their number. You are the creator, the Lord of the Universe; you create and destroy it. The 8.4 million species of beings issue forth from you.

Guru Nanak spent a life time to get the two faiths to live in harmony. 'Na Koi Hindu, Na Musalman' No one is Hindu and No one Muslim,' is arguably one of his first Sermons. Ironically, his own Land of five rivers has been partitioned beyond any scope of reconciliation. So deep has been the divide that one of the descendants of Mardana lifelong companion of Guru Nanak Dev ji Rababi Gulam Mohammad of Lahore was once dissuaded from reciting Kirtan because he professed a different faith.

According to H.P. Singh the outwardly appearance of Guru Nanak's followers has taken precedence over the awakening of the inner having for self-actualization, taking out the very soul from his teachings. It is a paradox of sorts that the Guru's final resting place is on the fault lines of a clash of ideologies.

"Shama-e-haq se munawar ho ye woh mehfil na thi, barish-e-rehmit hui lekin zameen-qabil Na thi." (Perhaps this was not the appropriate amenably which would appreciate the lamp of truth, rain of mercy did fall but the land turned out to be barren.)

Printing this book by Pingalwara gives me solace and satisfaction. It is humble homage to Guru Nanak Dev ji.

**Dr. Inderjit Kaur**

*President*

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar

## **Guru Nanak-His Important Contributions**

### **Bhupinder Singh Kohli**

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was the founder of 'The Sikh Religion'. He was followed by nine successors namely, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai, Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, who breathed his last in 1708. There was thus a continuous and unbroken period of 239 years in which the teachings of Guru Nanak were assimilated and practiced. The follower of Sikh religion are known as "Singhs". Although the great majority of the Sikhs live in the northern state of Punjab, many reside in U.P., Haryana and Delhi or are scattered in other parts of India. Since 1947, a large number of Sikhs have also settled in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, East Africa, Canada, UK, USA, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and other countries.

The medieval India was vitiated by various conflicts of cults and creeds. Moreover, the rigidity of caste and concept of 'Ahimsa' were responsible for the consequent raids of foreign adventures. In the eleventh century, when Muslim raiders became the rulers of India, entire Hindu population was subjected to slavery. There was neither any one to challenge the cruel rulers nor to enlighten and ameliorate the suffering masses. From his early childhood, Guru Nanak showed a meditative and contemplative nature. Both the Hindus and Muslims loved him. In spite of the, difficult means of transportation and communications during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Guru Nanak travelled as far as Assam in the East, Sri Lanka in the South, Tibet in the North and Mecca in the West. He met a lot of people including rulers and

priests of other religions and had fruitful discussions with the main object of sharing the message of Almighty God who loves all equally. His teachings (Divine Words) are included in the "Sri Guru Granth Sahib"-the most sacred scripture of the Sikhs. While sharing his message of love, peace and equality; he was very lucid, polite, humble, but logical, clear, convincing, firm and fearless.

### **Guru Nanak's Belief in God:**

Guru Nanak firmly believed that God is One and only One. Absolutely True Supreme Reality. The concept of God is reflected in the prologue to the Guru Granth Sahib, which in English could be described as follows:

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ  
ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ॥

One Universal Creator God. The Name Is Truth. Creative Being Personified. No Fear. No Hatred. Image of The Undying, Beyond Birth, Self-Existent. By Guru's Grace.

(SGGS-1)

*Guru Nanak further opined that God is universal. He does not belong to anyone race or nation. He is the God of all human beings. Guru Nanak also explained that God does not reside high in sky or on any other planet, and taught: "Why search for God outside, When He is here within us all".*

### **His Revolt Against Caste System:**

Guru Nanak considered, all human beings as children of God. He proclaimed, "how can mere accident of birth prejudice-ordain an individual's career and destiny"? He further emphasized that no one can be high or low when the Divine Potter made all persons of the same basic material. "All human beings are made out of the same clay. But the potter fashioned them into vessels of

many sorts. The body is composed of the five elements. Oh consider, if anyone has more or less in ones compositions". In place of caste—"Jaat", Guru Nanak emphasized—"Jyot", the inner-light possessed by the individual. So, a person's status depends on his/her evolution, behavior and good or bad deeds. According to Guru Nanak, birth or profession of any person does not make anyone as 'untouchable' low or of high caste. Thus concept of social equality was the lynchpin of the Guru's faith and he categorically declared: "religion does not consist in theories and mantras. The person who looks on all as equals is religious". Infact, when asked by the Maulvi of Mecca—"Who is superior: Hindu or Muslim"? Guru Nanak replied without any fear or favour: "God cares not for label. The creator searches the hearts of all persons and judges them according to their action. A person's worth depends on ones deeds and not on creed. Those who perform good deeds are alone accepted in "God's True Court". Guru Nanak also stressed that God's grace is not restricted to anyone religion or nation, and accordingly all were encouraged to live the life with love, dignity, mutual trust, understanding and welfare of the whole Universe.

Guru opined that God is Universal and does not belong to any one race or nation. Thus Nanak strived to bring Hindus and Muslims together. His life and teachings are a symbol of harmony. A popular couplet describes him as a Guru of the Hindu and Pir of the Muslims. Furthermore, *Guru Nanak not only verbally pleaded the cause of lowly and socially backward and downtrodden people, but also felt lowest among the lowly, he resides with them and has nothing to do with those who are egoist because of their so called worldly status based on caste or wealth.* It is there and there, O' God, that you look upon so mercifully,



where the lowly are looked after and honoured”.

### **Revolt Against Social Parasites:**

Well before the advent of Guru Nanak, Indian society was surrounded by social parasites. On one end, the cruel rulers, landlords and greedy traders were exploiting the masses for their personal benefits and on the other end were the religious priests-Brahmins, Mullahs, Yogis and various fakirs. Guru Nanak raised his voice and condemned them: “Without knowing the lord, one sings His Praises. A Starving Mullah turns his home into a mosque. To earn a living, one has his ears split; He becomes a mendicant and loses his self-respect. Do not fall at the feet of such a person who calls himself a Yogi or Pir, but lives on begging”. Guru Nanak also exposed the hypocrisy of the promoters of religion and pious pretenders:

ਆਂਟ ਸੇਤੀ ਨਾਕੁ ਪਕੜਹਿ ਸੁਝਤੇ ਤਿਨਿ ਲੋਅ॥

They close off their nostrils with their fingers, and claim to see the three worlds.

ਮਗਰ ਪਾਛੈ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਸੂਝੈ ਏਹੁ ਪਦਮੁ ਅਲੋਅ ॥੨॥ (ਅੰਗ ੬੬੩)

But they cannot even see what is behind them.

What a strange lotus pose this is! ॥2॥ (SGGS-662)

Here the Guru says, those who take bribe or who exploits others from their rights are falsely observing their religious acts...

He preached that to live on the labour of others was irreligious. Guru Nanak considered that any income derived through exploitation was amounting to misappropriation, and wrote, “To misappropriate the share of others is like beef for a Hindu and pork for a Muslim”. He also admonished the rulers for their misdeeds.

### **Protector of Women's Cause:**

In medieval India, women were equated with untouchables and treated as household slaves. They were

sold in child marriages, condemned to a miserable widowhood if they escape sati immolation, and were regarded unfit for religious instructions or temporal assignments. But Guru Nanak had the rare courage to equate women with men. Guru says, "Why call them inferior when they give birth to all human beings including the Kings and Prophets"? Thus, Sikh gentlemen and ladies practice married family life and they do not share West's concept of gay, lesbian and single parents tradition or continue to live for number of years as boy-girl friends. This system has been creating a lot of frustration amongst their children and burden on social welfare activities whereas Sikhs enjoy wholesome family life with great devotion and satisfaction.

ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥ (ਅੰਗ ੪੭੩)

So why call her bad ? From her, Kings are born.

(SGGS-473)

### **Towards An Open Society:**

Guru Nanak replaced inertia by action: 'Ahimsa', by heroic resistance and asceticism by a grapple with life. All the essentials of the open society were carried into daily practice: the joy of the householder to the recluse, the sharing of bread, the sovereignty of the people and equality of all faiths: in short the secularism of human brotherhood. Guru Nanak was liberator of the mind and the pioneer of the modern renaissance.

### **Salvation Theory:**

Guru Nanak rejected another popular concept that salvation could be acquired only through this 'avatar or that messiah'. According to him, there are no saviours except The Creator. The so called saviors only pointed to themselves and thus blasphemed against Almighty God. The Guru absolutely rejected personality cult hero

worship, idolatry and all the ritual bathing, penance, mantras, miracles and oracles. Guru Nanak practised the love of God, the love of man and loved the world as an entity resident within the creator. In this world, both good and evil have a role to play. Light acquires importance on account of darkness. Devil and evil disappear when we fully abide by the Creator's Will and perform the right deeds based on nothing but "Truthful living" in this world. Guru says: Truth is higher virtue, but still higher is truthful living.

### **Guru Nanak Dev ji & Black Money:**

During the time of the guru, a wealthy man named Dunichand had collected almost 40 sack of an unthinkable amount of black money. Guru ji went to him with a request to look after his needle and to return it to him in heaven. To this Dunichand replied saying that how could he return it to him in heaven when he couldn't take anything from here with him?

To this, Guru ji smiled and asked him that what would he do with the 40 sacks full of wealth? This question opened Dunichand's eyes and on Guruji's advice he used all his wealth for the welfare of the people and made his money meaningful and useful.

Have we not hidden our black money today? Is there no talk of welfare in our minds? If not, then isn't this message given by Guru Nanak the most effective way to abstain oneself from keeping black money. This has been said by Guru Nanak Sahib in his own words:

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਰਬਹੁ ਦੇਇ' ॥

One who works for what he eats, and gives some of what he has

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥੧॥

(ਅੰਗ ੧੨੪੫)

O Nanak, he knows the Path ॥1॥

(SGGS-1245)

## **Heaven And Hell:**

The concept of a heaven in high sky, and the hell deep under the seas, is not shared by Guru Nanak, The Sikhs do not believe in any hell where persons are tortured and burnt after death or they enjoy all luxuries in heaven. Sikhs believe that peace of mind and a state of equipoise attained by performing noble deeds and controlling worldly desires leads to heavenly life here on this very earth. Whereas forgetting the Creator and excessive indulgence in lust, anger, attachment, ego and greed bring misery and despair, which amount to living in a hell.

## **Futility of Rituals:**

Guru Nanak's approach or way of preaching, sometimes, were very dramatic, just to invite the attention of the people with whom he wanted to have discussion. For instance, his throwing water from river Ganges at Hardwar to the West and not towards the rising Sun (East) as the Hindu pilgrims were doing, was only to show the futility of the whimsical belief and wrong worship being practiced by the Hindus. Similarly, his act of lying at Mecca, with his feet towards "Kaaba", did not mean disrespect to the sacred place of the Muslims but was meant to demonstrate quite unassumingly, that God is everywhere, and not confined to any particular place or direction. On another occasion when the Brahmins at Kurukshetra insisted on fasting and abstaining from cooking food during the solar eclipse, Guru Nanak replied that there was no merit in such unfounded practices but his message was one of virtuous living and noble deeds. Thus wherever Guru Nanak went, he preached the need of purity of thought and right action while always realizing the presence of 'AkkalPurkh'—because he was a staunch believer in the existence, oneness, omnipresence and omniscience of Almighty God.



## Corruption and Guru Nanak Dev ji:

Today's universal problem is corruption. Guru Sahib also fought with this problem during his life. When Gurujī was working for Nawab Daulat Khan as his "Modi", (known as Tax Collector today), his colleagues were all taking bribes and indulged in corrupt practices. At that time Gurujī used to distribute a large portion of his salary to the poor. By doing so he tried to set an example for his fellow colleagues and prove to them that one's hard earned money was enough to live a life of restraint. Gurujī taught everybody about "your's, your's" (ਤੋਰਾ ਤੋਰਾ). In other words, he said that O God nothing is mine. The money that I get from the job that you have provided me is for the people you have created. Nothing is mine.

Along with this Gurujī fearlessly called non vegetarians, "Heartless lions and blood licking dogs." In this way Gurujī inspired the people to raise their voices against the prevalent malpractices.

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥

(ਅੰਗ ੧੨੮੮)

The kings are tigers, and their officials are dogs;

(SGGS-1288)

These words uttered by Gurujī will continue to act like a slap on the faces of the corrupt people.

### The Unique Approach:

The unique and universal religion established by Guru Nanak can also be the religion of the modern space age. The Guru, five centuries ago, talked of millions of worlds, universe, suns and moons, as the science does reveal today and is still in the process of sighting different planets. His teachings were based on the true logic and spiritual wisdom. There is no place for blind faith, religious bigotry or fanaticism in the fundamental principles or actual day to day working of the Sikh religion. What guru Nanak earnestly wished is that a Hindu, a true Muslim,



Christian or a yogi, etc. should become a pious Hindu, a true Muslim, a faithful Christian because the religion does not teach to hate or persecute persons or other faiths.

### **Conclusion:**

Guru Nanak ordained a threefold injunction to the Sikhs: (1) 'NaamJapna'—Ever remembers God, which does not mean sitting cross-legged in abstract contemplation. It means reading, understanding and practicing the Revealed Divine Word to enable us to get a sense of perspective on life, (2) 'Kirtkarna'—means to earn livelihood with honesty and hard work without any exploitation or cheating. (3) 'Vand chhakna'—perhaps the most important of all, is sharing our earnings with other needy person; not only wealth but also our time, energy and skills. It is a practical approach embodied in the Sikh teaching of 'Seva'—service to others which leads us to strive for the welfare of entire mankind irrespective of any distinction. I must say that no one can describe the greatness of Guru Nanak as he lived for the welfare of the whole world.

In this way Gururji has given mankind the solution to almost all the problems. Today, on the occasion of celebrating Gururji's 550th Birth Anniversary, we should remember his teachings and try to improve our lives. Even today if we remain untouched from this, then these words of a poet seem to have been written for us:

**"Shama hak se munavar ho yeh who mehfil na thi  
Baarish-E-Rehmat hui magar zameen Kaabil na thi.**

Which means, O Gururji you lit the flame of truth in front of us, but, we like blind people are deprived of it. O Gururji you gave up your family and went on innumerable tours and showered your benovolence on us but we were only like a barren land. Come, we should not remain blind, or like a barren land.

# Guru Nanak And The Faith of Affirmation

## Kulbir Kaur

Guru Nanak propounded the spiritual philosophy of affirmation and discouraged the negation of life. He assert that the Supreme Being, Akal-Purakh, is to be found in one's own heart and liberation is to be realised in the world itself 'amid its laughter and sport, fineries and foods'. The world is real and withdrawal is considered as the negation of faith as the spirit of affirmation is the basic tenet of Guru Nanak's teachings.

The spiritual path revealed by Nanak ji was not the lonely path of an ascetic who has renounced the world. The path of salvation, on the contrary, combines meditation in the form of Nam, the Divine Word, Shabad, while fulfilling the responsibilities of everyday life. He explains this idea through the metaphor of a lotus. He says, 'Just as the lotus in the lake remains undisturbed by the water, just as the duck is not made wet by floating in water, in the same way, by linking one's consciousness with the Supreme consciousness, through utterance of the Holy Name, one crosses the world ocean.'

Guru Nanak emphasized the unity of life and negated all forms of divisions. All life forms were regarded as equal. The Almighty resides in everything and His creation is his manifestation. The first sermon of Guru Nanak was, 'Na koi Hindu na Musalman'—There is neither Hindu nor Muslim. When asked, 'Who is the greater of the two, Hindu or Muslim?' the Guru replied, 'Without good deeds, both will come to grief.' When questioned by some, 'Of what religion are you', the Guru answered, 'I am a mere man, made of five elements, a play thing in the hands of God,' 'My God is not in the

books of either east or the west, He is the God of not one denomination, race or colour, but of humankind.'

Guru Nanak, in the same manner, rejected caste-based distinctions and social hierarchies. He says, 'Meaningless is caste and meaningless are caste names, the same shadow protects all beings. What can caste do? Caste and honour are determined by deeds.'

Guru Nanak strongly denounced the notion of purity and impurity. Guru Nanak writes, 'If the idea of impurity be admitted, there is impurity in everything. There are worms in cow dung and in wood; there is no grain of corn without life. In the first place, there is life in water, by which everything is made green. So impurity of mind to be washed away by divine knowledge.'

Guru Nanak rejected discrimination based on gender. In Sikhism, women are considered equal to men, with same souls, same sensibilities and equal levels of spirituality. She is regarded as a doorway of awareness and salvation, who, because of her ability to conceive and give birth, becomes not only the creator but also the medium through which society is maintained. 'Then why call her inferior from whom all great ones are born', says the Guru. According to the Sikh code of conduct, 'It is not proper for a Sikh woman to keep her face hidden.'

In Sikhism, veil is compared to suppression. The Gurus have even handled the question of 'gazing' or 'staring' by men. Instead of women, men should be blamed for all kinds of sinful thoughts that cross their minds when they see a woman.

(The Times of India, 12 November 2019)

# Teachings of Guru Nanak Dev: 550 Years

Stuti Malhotra

The year 2019, on the occasion of 550 years of Guru Nanak Dev's birth, is a good time to remind ourselves of the revered master's teachings. He spoke of one God, universal brotherhood, love, humility, simplicity, equality and tolerance. He did not restrict himself to one religion; he chose to embrace the good teaching of all faiths, that have universal applicability and validity for all times to come. Hence it was said, "Guru Nanak Shah Fakir/Hindu ka Guru,/Mussalman ka pir."

Guru Nanak did not believe in division between people on the basis of caste, colour, religion and race. He saw only two kinds of people: Gurmukh, the God-oriented and Manmukh, those who are self-oriented. A Gurmukh devotes himself to God. He practices truth and works for the welfare of humankind. Whereas a Manmukh follows his own thinking and practises falsehood and selfishness.

Guru Nanak bestowed on Mardana, the title of 'Bhai' meaning 'brother'. Bhai Mardana was a Muslim, and he was the disciple of Nanak Dev. As mentioned in the Janamsakhi—which literally means 'birth stories of Guru Nanak Dev'—by the act of honouring Mardana, Guru Nanak demonstrated that neither caste, class, affluence, poverty nor religion were the criteria to follow Sikhism. All men are equal. The only prerequisite was to have faith in one God, purification of soul and dedication to God.

*Guru Nanak gave us the following three pillars of Sikhism: Naam japna, Kirat karni and Vand chakhna.*

Naam japna is to recite and repeat the name of God. When somebody recites the name of God, he is in communion with the Lord. In Sikhism, everything is

connected with the name of God. One can take the Name while being in sangat-congregation of holy saints—or in private meditation. In both cases, one should not follow a ritual but with deep concentration recite the name of God. Contemplation in solitude is as important as being in sangat.

Kirat karni is earning one's livelihood with honest labour. Kirat is central to the Sikh concept of seva, service. Janamsakhi tells us that the Guru preferred a coarse meal earned through hard labour than a sumptuous meal at a wealthy zamindar's place.

Vand chakhna is best explained as 'sharing is caring'. On one occasion, when Guru Nanak was with his two sons and Lehna (Guru Angad Dev), there was a corpse covered with cloth. He asked who will eat this, nobody responded, but Lehna, having full faith in his Master, accepted it and when he removed the cloth, he saw there was a tray full of sacred food, which he served to his master and ate the leftovers. On this, Guru Nanak said, "Lehna, you were blessed with sacred food because you shared it. Similarly, people should use wealth not only for themselves but share it with others. If one consumes it only for himself then it is like a corpse. But when we share it with others, it becomes sacred." This constitutes the basis of langar, community kitchen, and dasvandh, sharing one-tenth of one's earnings with the community.

When a person follows these three principles, he is well on his way to realizing the potential and purpose of his life.

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*(The Times of India, 1 May 2019)*



# Guru Nanak's Teachings

## Transcend Barriers

Kulbir Kaur

Once Guru Nanak, while travelling to Kashmir, met Pandit Brahm Das, a learned but proud man. Brahm Das approached the Guru with two camel loads of books and texts and with a stone idol suspended from his neck. Unable to find out the religious identity of the Guru, he questioned Guru Nanak on his faith, the rituals he observed and the food he ate. The Guru replied. "There is but one highway and there is but one entrance; He created Himself and Himself He recognized. God is Himself the relish, the thing relished and the relisher".

Brahm Das further asked him how the Lord existed before creation. "There was neither night nor day, neither sun nor moon, no earth, nor firmaments. He alone was there. There was neither birth nor speech, neither air nor water, neither creation nor destruction, neither coming nor going. There was neither male nor female, neither caste nor-reincarnation, neither pain nor pleasure. The Unspeakable One was Himself the speaker, the Unknowable One had alone the knowledge of Himself", answered Guru Nanak.

The Almighty, as seen by Guru Nanak, is Ik Onkar, the One. He is the Creator and the creation. The Nirakar (Formless) manifests through creation so the question of divisions does not emerge. The Supreme is Satnam, the only Truth and it is futile to please Him through rituals and sacrifices. Outward forms, formulas, incantations, image-worship and superstitions are of no use.

Guru Nanak exhorted the people to establish a direct link with the Almighty through a simple marg of Nam-simran, chanting the Name. Divine love is the only

way of salvation. When he was weighing wheat-flour in the provision store, as Nanak would reach the number 13 (tera), which in Punjabi means 'yours', Nanak could only utter, "Tera, Tera, Tera...(Lord, I am Thine, I am Thine)".

*Can there be a love of God without service? All living beings are God's own and none can obtain any reward without rendering service, says Guru Nanak.* In fact, we shall be rewarded according to the service we render. Vand-chakna, sharing, incorporates another aspect of Sikh faith. It is like providing service to society and people. But this sharing should be based on kirat karna, honest livelihood. 'Nam japna, vand-chakna and kirat karna' along with seva, form the main pillars of Sikhism as propounded by Guru Nanak.

In Japji Sahib, Guru Nanak explains the five stages in the path of realization. Dharam-khand is where a man performs his duties towards himself, family and society. Jnana-khand symbolizes knowledge where man realizes the vastness of God's creation. Saram-khand is the realm of spiritual effort and a man tries to imbibe the qualities of God like truth, justice and compassion. Jaisa sewai taisa ho-i-you become what you meditate on. Karam-khand is grace. With the grace of Guru, he gets a vision of God's realm and becomes a Gurmukh. The last stage shows him Sach-khand, the Almighty, the Truth. These stages are a part of householder's way of life, not of a renouncer. Guru Nanak says that this highway of illumination is open to one and all. "The learned and the illiterate can both attain the highest spiritual stage", says the Guru.

Hence, listening to the Word, Gurbani and its acceptance, and then carrying out the Guru's instruction in everyday life is what distinguishes the Sikh way of life.

*(The Times of India, 23 November 2019)*

## Politics, Ethics And Faith

*The Babur-bani graphically describes how the Mughal ruler's invasions affected the people. Standing out as a powerful comment on the politics of the time, Guru Nanak's verses sensitive portray their sufferings.*

### Indu Banga

The term Babur-bani occurs in a composition of Guru Nanak for the proclamation of Babur's rule. Subsequently, it denoted four somewhat overlapping verses in which he graphically describes the effects of Babur's invasions and sensitively portrays the sufferings of the people. Together, the Babur-bani verses stand out as a powerful comment on contemporary politics, albeit subordinated to Guru Nanak's ethical considerations and his faith in God. Since each verse has several layers, an attempt has been made to isolate ideas of different order, and view these in their totality at the end.

#### 1. Raag Asa (Guru Granth Sahib, PP 360-61)

Guru Nanak says that while Babur befriended 'Khurasaan', he terrified Hindustan. He was sent by God as His agent of death. People received so much beating that they shrieked in pain, and Guru Nanak feels obliged to ask God who is the Creator of all beings: 'Did you not feel compassion?' 'If the mighty kill one another, there is no cause for anger.' But, if a powerful lion preys on the herd of cows, its master is to be questioned. Guru Nanak implies that the 'dogs' (Lodi rulers) have spoiled the precious jewel (country), and no one feels concerned about the dead.

In God's eyes, a highly placed wealthy person is but a worm pecking the corn. To get something, one should kill one's ego and remember God's name.

## 2. Raag Asa (Guru Granth Sahib, PP.416-17)

This verse dwells on the suffering of the women, poignantly depicting the conditions after Babur's invasions: The heads adorned with tresses and partings filled with vermillion, are now shaven with scissors, and the throats are choked with dust. The ladies living once in palaces cannot come near them.

Guru Nanak hails God and marvels at His limitlessness: He continuously creates and beholds various situations.

When the women got married, they had handsome bridegrooms beside them. The brides came seated in palanquins adorned with ivory. Water was sprinkled over their heads to ward off evil, and glittering fans were waved over them. They were gifted a lakh of rupees while seated and a lakh when they stood up. They would eat coconut and dry dates and enjoy the bed. Now, ropes are put around their necks, and their pearl necklaces are broken. Both wealth and beauty, which afforded them pleasure, have become their enemies. The soldiers were allowed to dishonor them and take them away.

God alone bestows greatness, or awards punishment as it pleases Him. Remembering God beforehand could obviate punishment.

Guru Nanak then turns to the rulers who had lost their good sense in sensual enjoyments. After the proclamation of Babur's rule (Babur-bani), no prince ate food. Muslims could not offer their daily prayers, and Hindus could not worship their gods. Without the sacred squares (*chauke*), the Hindu women (*Hiduwanian*) could not bathe and apply frontal marks (*tikke*). They never remembered Ram, now they are not allowed to utter Khuda. To enquire about the



welfare of their dear ones, some women meet those who had returned home. It is so writ (likhia) in the lot of some that they sit and bewail in pain.

Whatever pleases Him that alone transpires. What is man before God ?

### 3. Raag Asa (Guru Granth Sahib, PP 417-18)

Guru Nanak evocatively describes change for the ruling class: Where are those sports, stables and horses? Where are the kettle-drums and bugles? Where are those sword belts and chariots? Where are those scarlet uniforms? Where are those mirrored finger-rings and beautiful faces which are no longer to be seen ?

God is addressed as the Master of the world, establishing and uprooting men, and distributing wealth, as it pleases Him.

Where are those houses, doors pavilions, palaces, and beautiful *sarais*? Where are the comfortable couch and the beautiful damsel by seeing whom one loses sleep? Where are those betel-leaves, betel-sellers and harems? They have vanished like the shadow.

For this wealth, many are ruined, and many disgraced; it is amassed with sins, and it does not go with the dead. He, whom the Creator Himself destroys, is first deprived of virtue.

When they heard of Babur's invasions, millions of holy men failed to check his advance. He burned houses, resting places and strong palaces, cutting the princes into pieces and rolling them in dust. But no Mughal became blind, and no one wrought any miracle!

Swords clashed in the battle between the Mughals and the Pathans. One side aimed and fired the guns, and the other advanced the elephant. They, who lost their lives,



were destined to die. The robes of some Hindu, Muslim, Bhatti and Rajput women were torn from head to foot, while some died. How would those women have passed the night whose handsome husbands did not come home?

Guru Nanak asks, to whom should one complain? The Creator acts on His own and causes others to act. Sorrow and well-being are in accordance with His will. Before whom should one bewail? It pleases God to give His command, and one gets what is writ for him.

#### 4. Raag Tilang (Guru Granth Sahib, PP 722-723):

As God's message, it is addressed to Bhai Lalo, focusing on the atrocities perpetrated by Babur's soldiers, in all probability, in Saidpur (Eminabad) in 1521 CE.

Descending from Kabul with the 'marriage party of sin' (*Paap di junj*), Babur forcibly demands 'charity' ('*daan*' of women). Modesty and righteousness have vanished and falsehood has taken over. In place of qazis and Brahmins, marriage rites (actually, rape) are presided over by Satan. Muslim and Hindu women and others became the victims, and in their suffering, they pray to God. The eulogies of blood (*Khoon de Sohille*) are being sung and the saffron of blood (*Ratt ka kangu*) is being sprinkled. In this city of corpses (*Maaspuri*), Guru Nanak alone sings the glory of God and describes this affair.

Having created human beings and attached them to pleasures, God now sits apart and alone, and beholds them. He is the true Master and He gives true justice. By the time the body cloth is torn into shreds, Hindustan shall remember that coming in (Bikrami) 78, they (Mughals) shall depart in (Bikrami) 97, and then a great man shall arise. Guru Nanak says, he utters the word of truth at the right time.

## An Overview

In the eyes of Guru Nanak, politics is inseparable from ethics. It serves as a yardstick for him. His conception of God is the ultimate arbiter. God's will and justice provide the final explanation for Babur's invasions and the sufferings it entailed.

Guru Nanak's political outlook is rather unique for his times. He thinks of himself as belonging to 'Hindustan,' which is distinct from the countries beyond the river Indus. He feels exercised that this 'jewel' has been spoiled by the misrule of the Lodis. They indulged in pleasures, neglected administration and oppressed the people. The Lodi rulers also failed in their duty to protect their defenceless subjects against Babur's invasions. Guru Nanak has no problem if warfare is between equals. The battle between the Mughals and Afghan—two broadly equal sides—is mentioned in passing only. The ouster of the Afghan ruling class also seems to be acceptable as a necessary corollary of political change. But Guru Nanak does not absolve Babur of the atrocities perpetrated by his men on the common people, especially women. In moral terms, Babur stands sharply indicted by Guru Nanak, and he visualizes an early end of Mughal rule.

Ethically, Babur's men represented unrighteousness and falsehood—the two things Guru Nanak strongly disapproves of. He holds Babur directly responsible for the sins of his men when they indiscriminately plundered and raped women, throwing modesty overboard. It was futile for religious men trying to wrought miracles. Instead, the rulers should have made efforts to check Babur's advance. But their attachment to pleasures made them oblivious of their duty.

The wealth amassed by oppression and other wrong means is a sin in Guru Nanak's eyes. Wealth and virtue do not go together. Rather, ill-gotten wealth leads to destruction. Wealth, at any rate, is insignificant in Guru Nanak's eyes.

*What is important for Guru Nanak is to kill one's ego or self-centeredness and remember God.* Guru Nanak repeatedly suggests that had the men and women remembered God beforehand they would have escaped the suffering entailed in Babur's invasions. When Guru Nanak uses the word *likhia* (written), it is destined or preordained only in the sense of punishment by God for bad deeds.

God's greatness, limitlessness and power are underlined in all Babur-bani verses. He is the master of the world, and is in it and outside it. He watches over everything. He is the real source of greatness and wealth, which flow from His Grace.

As mentioned earlier, He is also the source of punishment. Guru Nanak seems to account for the fall of the Lodis, rape of women and sufferings of the people, in general, in terms of God's inscrutable will and true justice, which govern the world.

In the realm of politics, only a just and righteous ruler lasts because he has God's mandate. What a mortal could do is to have trust in God.

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(*The Tribune*, 3 November 2019)

## Life, Out of Death—To The Self !

“ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਸੋ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਦੁਜੀ ਵਾਰ ॥”

(ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੫੮)

“One, who through the Guru's word, becometh dead, to the self (ego), becometh deathless i.e. dieth no more (overcometh transmigration) ”.

(Guru Nanak, in Srirag)

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸੁ ਮਰਣੁ ਦਿਖਾਏ ॥ ਮਰਣੁ ਰਹਣੁ ਰਸੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਭਾਏ॥ ਗਰਬੁ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ ਗਗਨ ਪੁਰੁ ਪਾਏ ॥੧॥ ਮਰਣੁ ਲਿਖਾਇ ਆਏ ਨਹੀ ਰਹਣਾ॥ ਹਰਿ ਜਪਿ ਜਾਪਿ ਰਹਣੁ ਹਰਿ ਸਰਣਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਤ ਦੁਬਿਧਾ ਭਾਗੈ ॥ ਕਮਲੁ ਬਿਗਾਸਿ ਮਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਲਾਗੈ॥ ਜੀਵਤੁ ਮਰੈ ਮਹਾ ਰਸੁ ਆਗੈ ॥੨॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਸਚ ਸੰਜਮਿ ਸੂਚਾ॥ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਪਉੜੀ ਉਚੈ ਉਚਾ॥ ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਜਮ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਮੂਚਾ ॥੩॥ ਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਮਿਲਿ ਅੰਕਿ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਘਰੁ ਮਹਲੁ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਉਮੈ ਮਾਰਿ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ ॥”

(ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੫੩)

“When the true Guru meeteth, he revealeth the meaning of true death (which is death to the lower self, resulting in the life of the Spirit). Then one liveth, dead to the self, and findeth pleasure, in this kind of living; since one realizeth clearly that by destroying one's self (Ego), one reacheth the Realm of the Heavens. Death is writ, in everybody's lot, and no one abideth here forever, but by dwelling on Him (i.e. on His Name), there is an abiding life, because then it is under His shelter (Who ever abideth), Pause, When the true Guru meeteth, Duality departeth and the lotus of the mind, flowereth, because the mind, then, remaineth attached to the Lord. He who dieth to the self, there is before him, the great joy of true living. On meeting the true Guru, one is disciplined, in the life of truth, and made pure, and thus, one riseth higher

*and higher (spiritually), through the Guru's Ladder. It is through the grace of the Guru, that one meeteth the Lord and killeth the fear of Death. On meeting the Guru, one is held in Embrace of the Lord and, by the Guru's grace, see-eth the Lord's Palace (within the soul); Nanak, by stilling one's ego, one is merged in the Lord".*

*(Guru Nanak, in Gauri)*

The gist of the above hymn is contained in its 'Pause-line', which emphasizes the point, that human life, on the physical plane, is impermanent. It is only, in the spiritual plane and, under His Shelter, that it fructifies and is made whole & permanent, otherwise it is subject to the ravages of time, as every other life is. Decay, followed by death, overtakes every life, i.e. all life must perish, except the Timeless One, and there is no escape. Yet, life is so dear that people love to cling to it, for as long as they can, even if it be unhappy. An ancient Greek philosopher vigorously maintained that life was no better than death, yet he himself refused to die. When asked to explain the contradiction, he replied that he wanted to live, because death too was no better than life. Surely, he was talking in physical terms and did not know that there was a kind of living that made life permanent, a life in which there was neither pain nor suffering nor death. The essential pre-requisite for that kind of life, is death to the self. When one dies to the self, one lives under His Shelter i.e. in His Constant Presence, Who is Deathless, as also the Destroyer of suffering. So long as one is dominated by the self i.e. by the lower self, one creates conflict and strife. In other words, it means that life cannot be built fruitfully, on the basis of ego or self-interest, because then one can never produce harmony and concord, in one's life and, in consequence, remains



haunted by death, misery and unhappiness, even though, in God's Scheme to things, happiness and peace, are every one's natural inheritance. When one pursues the passing and becomes a slave to the lower self, the beauty and the grandeur of the life of the Higher Self, is not achieved, i.e. the life of truth, love, bliss and freedom, remains untasted. One must come back to the path of self-effacement i.e. the effacement of the lower self, so as to fulfill oneself. It is only after one learns to die to this self that one attunes to the Lord, and thus becomes Deathless, with Him. It is a kind of death that gives spiritual re-birth. The so-called death, on the physical plane, then, loses its terror and may even be welcomed, if it helps to keep the flame of the Self burn more brightly. When one knows the art of true living, which is only coming into harmony, with the Essence of Life, by losing the self, one is ever ready, to lay down one's life, if this is necessary, to promote the life of the Higher Self, as defined above:

“ਜਨਮੁ ਜੀਤਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਮਨੁ ਮਾਨਿਆ ॥

ਆਪਿ ਮੂਆ ਮਨੁ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥

ਨਜਰਿ ਭਈ ਘਰੁ ਘਰ ਤੇ ਜਾਨਿਆ ॥”

(ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੫੩)

*“After conquering life (i.e. its passions), the mind is pleased, if called upon, to die (for the Self i.e. for God, for Truth etc.). When Ego dieth, the Mind is revealed (realized), through the mind itself. By His Grace, the True Home is then recognized, within the home”.*

(Guru Nanak, in Gauri)

The saint Kabir also speaks of a certain death (i.e. Death to the self), that promotes life, thus :

“ਕਬੀਰ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਰਨੇ ਤੇ ਜਗੁ ਡਰੈ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਆਨੰਦੁ ॥

ਮਰਨੇ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਪਾਈਐ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦੁ ॥” (ਅੰ: ੧੩੬੫)

*"O Kabir, death, which the whole world is afraid of, so much, hath a joy for me, it is by dying (to the self), that the Supreme Lord of Perfect Bliss, is found".*

*(Salok Kabir Ji)*

Thus, out of a certain death (death to the self) springs life and out of this life may spring the holy urge to suffer and even die, for truth and righteousness. In any case, one must first know the art of true living, which is no more than dying to the self, before one is able to suffer truly or even die truly i.e. cheerfully for Gods' Causes. Then, one is a living martyr, even if the world does not actually kill him. The short hymn, we have given, in the beginning of this chapter, eulogises the particular art of living, out of which may emerge, at times, martyrdom, as a matter of course, if that be necessary to promote Truth.

In order to understand this theme, we shall refer to the Guru's own life, for, no other person could have known the art better than he did. Any event of his life, will indicate, how he conducted himself, when called upon to face untruth, wherever it prevailed. He had killed the little self and had got attuned to the Higher Self i.e. to the life of the Spirit. He had first merged in the Spirit and, in consequence, had identified himself, with humanity, his life getting dedicated entirely, to Truth. The whole humanity had become his family and, cutting across all narrow loyalties, he had placed himself, unreservedly, at the service of His Master, so as to act, according to His Commands and to go, wherever He wanted him to go, irrespective of the risks and difficulties involved. Here now is a specimen, of an event of the kind.

During the Guru's tours to the Arab Lands, he was

once in Baghdad, the stronghold, then, of highly bigoted Muslim divines. The place had, at the time, a special attraction for him, for, it afforded him, an opportunity, to storm all that was narrow, hypocritical, superstitious, unholy and, in short, untrue. Mardana was, of course, with him. Both had stayed outside the city, in a graveyard, where they sang, in loving devotion, the praises of the Lord. Then suddenly, the Guru stood up, to shout the 'azan', as he had done in Mecca, earlier. But this time, his 'azan' was not wholly, in conformity with the conventional one. He had added a few words of his own, in praise of God, expressed in his own language, and had omitted, to utter the name of the Prophet. He knew that he was in a place, where bigotry, reaction, intolerance and fanaticism, of the worst type, had to be faced. There was surely, a personal risk, to his life. Idealists had rarely lived, to see their dreams fulfilled, if their idealism was not merely, a lip service to ideals. But that consideration, could not deter him, from his resolve, to serve the cause of Truth, broad mindedly, and to show the way to the misguided people. He did not take long to become the talk of the city. Many people soon gathered, round him, some out of curiosity, a stranger roused, and others, in holy wrath, against a man, who had committed the dire crime of distorting the 'azan', and omitting the Prophet's name. But the Guru kept on singing, unconcerned, the glories of God. In this context, he also spoke of the limitlessness of God. In particular, he said, there were millions and millions of upper and lower regions. Now, this too was, for the unintelligent bigots, an offence, against the teachings of the Holy Book which, according to their way of thinking, had declared, that there were only seven upper regions and seven lower regions,

and no more. There was wild uproar among people, followed by gesticulations, threats and curses. The matter was reported to the Pir, named Dastgir, the religious head of the place, at the time. He was not a bad man intrinsically, but he was a fanatic, all the same. He was afraid of public opinion too, and he knew that the public was already very much exercised, over the matter. Like others, he also considered the Guru's action, as an affront to Islam, and to the holy Prophet. He, therefore, declared his verdict (fatwa), that for that kind of offence, the stranger merited, to be stoned to death. Now, it can be imagined, that the verdict, must have engendered wild fury, among the people, already much upset. They were not bad men, but religious fanaticism, often turned even good men, into criminals. And, what crimes have not been committed, by fanatics, in the name of religion? It was exactly against this mental condition, that the Guru had taken the extreme personal risk. The mob was now preparing, to strike. And why should they not, when the striking, as believed by them, was to be done, for the glory and advancement of Islam? People had been fed on the belief, that killing the 'infidels', was a meritorious act, and the surest way, to win paradise. Mardana saw the mad fury, raging round them, and was greatly frightened. But the Guru counseled him, to forget his little self, for the sake of Truth, and let God's Will be done. He himself had died to the self, but Mardana had not, and hence the difference of approach, in a difficult situation. He said, if they were called upon to lay down life, for the love of God, expressed through the service of misguided humanity, they should consider themselves fortunate. If the hand of intolerance and hate, struck them down, they should face it, heroically:



“ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥”

(ਸਲੋਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ, ਅੰ: ੧੪੧੨)

*“If thou settest thy foot, on this path, lay down thy head, without hesitation”.*

*(A Salok of Guru Nanak)*

Then, unperturbed, he proceeded towards the crowd, smiled at them and, in perfect humility, offered himself, to be pelted at, or butchered alive, in any manner they liked, in pursuance of the fatwas. He was a living martyr, always ready to lay down life, to uphold truth and righteousness. There was, in his great heart, no hatred, no anger and no fear. He was truly brave and fearless, and yet humble. He had prepared himself for the worst, if that advanced Gods' Causes. Cowards died many times, before their death. But this man of God, could not be shaken, by the looming of death, about him. He had become the embodiment of love, humility, forgiveness, compassion and contentment. He had already died to the self, and had no cause to hate any. He neither inspired fear, in others, nor had any fear, from others. He had set out from home, to revive dead spirits, soothe dry and parched hearts and bless despairing people, wherever they might (be, with God's love, supported by his own divine touch, whatever the cost. He began to sing God's Glories. Soon, there was reaction, among the people. The furious mob felt quailed, before this mighty man. The biographer says, the arms people had raised to strike, became stiff; and their steps remained fixed to the ground. Yes, it is quite true, that such a thing did happen, though the same need not be taken, too literally. The really great thing about it, was that people mad about their so-called religious faith, were prevented, through love and humility, from doing a thing, wholly



barbarous. Their steps faltered and their arms became stationary, because they did not have the heart to strike the man, so sweet, so humble, so full of love, so devoid of enmity, anger and passion. It was really the loftiness of the Guru's soul, that had produced healthy reactions, in their hearts, and they stood in mute stupefaction. They saw a glory in the face, they never saw before. It reflected love, non-violence and endurance, in sufferings, which surely were powerful instruments, capable of producing, change of heart, in the adversary. Every person, however far-removed from God, had a soul, that could be awakened, through the power of love, if that power be strong enough. The people, he was tackling here, were not devoid of human feelings. Many of them, were religious minded, although their vision, had been turned, to be narrow, twisted and clouded. In this case, it was not altogether difficult, to produce a change of heart, in them, and by a man, possessing, such a lofty soul, as the Guru had.

By this time, the Pir had also arrived, and was himself similarly shaken, inwardly. The people felt like inquiring, discussing and arguing, with the Guru, about some of his utterances that had provoked so much antagonism, bitterness and animosity. The Pir asked him to explain, as to why he had insulted Islam Source of Bliss.

“ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਸੋ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ ॥”

(ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗ ਮਹਾਲ ੧, ਅੰ: ੫੮)

*“One who, by means of the Guru's Word, dieth to the self, becometh deathless.*

(Guru Nanak, in Srirag)

Again :

“ਜੀਵਦਿਆ ਮਰੁ ਮਾਰਿ ਨ ਪਛੋਤਾਈਐ ॥”

(ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੪੭)

*"Those who live, dead to the self, have no regrets of life"*  
(Guru Nanak, in Manjh)

Again:

“ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਹਰਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੋਇ ॥”

(ਸਲੋਕ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੪੧੦)

*"One who recogniseth one's Self, meeteth the Lord, and then, one dieth no more, as one's coming and going (transmigration) are over".* (Guru Nanak, in Manjh)

*Such men, who die to the self, become permanent and immortalized, in another sense also, in the event of their actually laying down their lives, for worthy causes. They are cherished, by the world, as martyrs of faith, and are remembered, with devotion and respect, throughout ages. They provide inspiration and guidance, to the erring people, of all times. The things to be emphasized here, however, is that it is not for the mere physical dying i.e. for getting actually killed, for some cause, that they come to command such high adoration, of the people, as is carried on, from generation to generation, though physical dying too has a glamour of its own. Many people have died, in history, for small things, but they were soon forgotten. Warriors have died in the battlefield, to establish their invincibility and their fearlessness. Religious fanatics have braved death, under false notions of winning paradise, through the sacrifice of life. Women have offered for concrementation, with their dead husbands, in pursuance of a hideous custom only. Thus, mere dying, however heroic and brave, is not necessarily, in itself, an achievement, of a high order. Suffering, for its own sake, can have no meaning. The Guru had himself witnessed people, engaged in the mortifications of the body, performing tortuous mental and physical exercises, cutting themselves, in two,*

over stakes, in holy places, and undergoing penances, with their bodies reversed, believing that all these were great achievements, leading to Moksh. Yet, he had no use, for any of these purposeless sufferings. He had, rather, said:

“ਅਰਧ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਕਟਾਈਐ ਸਿਰਿ ਕਰਵਤੁ ਧਰਾਇ ॥  
ਤਨੁ ਹੈਮਚਲਿ ਗਾਲੀਐ ਭੀ ਮਨ ਤੇ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥”

(ਸਿਰੀਰਾਗ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੬੨)

*“If thou cuttest thy body, into two, and gettest thy head sawn, or wastest thy body, in the cold of the Himalayas, the disease of thy mind, will not be cured’.*

(Guru Nanak, in Srirag)

For him, aimless suffering, revealed a misguided mental condition, and a misplaced emphasis, on wrong values of things, aimless dying, of course, being very much more unworthy. Human life was a precious gift, from God, never to be thrown away, over small matters. We have seen that the Guru had sanctified human body, and had called it the temple of God, and therefore a sacred trust. Purposeless dying, in this context, was a suicide and a sin against God. Unless one first died to the self, one's dying, even for some accepted good cause, had no meaning. Saint Kabir had said:

“ਕਬੀਰ ਮਰਤਾ ਮਰਤਾ ਜਗੁ ਮੁਆ ਮਰਿ ਭੀ ਨ ਜਾਨਿਆ ਕੋਇ ॥  
ਐਸੇ ਮਰਨੇ ਜੋ ਮਰੈ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨ ਮਰਨਾ ਹੋਇ ॥”

(ਸਲੋਕ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ, ਅੰ: ੧੩੬੫)

*“O Kabir, the whole world dieth, but no one knoweth, the way of true dying. If one knew the art, one would not have to die again”.*

(Shalok Kabir Ji)

It is, therefore, wrong to measure the greatness of a holy person, in terms of any event of his life, including the event of his willingly, laying down life, or in terms of the amount of sufferings, undergone by him, for any



cause he held dear. Any such event, had only presented an opportunity, to test his character and his stamina, and was not, in itself, everything. It could not be a chance occurrence that he clashed against this or that person, and suffered, in consequence. It must be the natural result of all that he stood for. The fact always is, that good men cannot remain unconcerned, if evil is spreading everywhere, before, them. Social supremacy of one class over another, political subjugation of the whole people, and exploitation, in this or that form, are all evils, which men of God, cannot but resist. They cannot remain merely on-lookers, indifferent to what happens, before their eyes. There is, thus, bound to be a clash, in one form or another, between the good and the evil, particularly, when one's concept of battlefield, is so enlarged as to include the entire life of man. It was in this context, that the Guru had said:

“ਭਗਤਾ ਤੈ ਸੈਸਾਰੀਆ ਜੋੜੁ ਕਦੇ ਨ ਆਇਆ ॥”

(ਮਾਝ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੪੫)

*“It is never possible, for men of God and men of the world, to pull together”.*

(Guru Nanak, in Manjh)

Bernard Shaw was right, when he said, ironically, that it was always a dangerous thing to be good. What he meant was that honest men had to suffer, so long as there was evil in the world, since they could make no compromise with principles. If they were really great, it was not possible for them, to agree, on a compromise, with evil forces, at the cost of truth and justice, however pleasant or attractive, the terms of compromise might be. There is a beautiful verse in the Upanishads that draws a distinction between the good and the pleasant, and emphasizes preference for moral and spiritual values, as against worldly benefits. It reads: “The good is one thing,

the pleasant another. These two lead to very different ends. The wise are not deceived, by the attractions of the pleasant, and perish”.

Thus, suffering and even dying, have always their roots, in true living. For men, living truly, there is no escape, from a clash, with evil doers, and in that clash, situations, sometimes, do arise, when the supreme sacrifice of life, has to be made. The way of Truth, is always the way of suffering, the way of the cross. Tagore had visualized: “All the saints of the world, who had done anything great, had to bear opposition and insult”. The following statement of Aurobindo, should also be noted: “God has made this world, a field of battle, and filled it with the trampling combatants, and the cries of slaughter and struggle. Would you filch His Peace, without paying the price, He has fixed for it?” All the same, dying is never to be made a cheap affair. Life is too valuable a thing, to admit of an exercise of any light-hearted frivolity. The Guru has laid down conditions too, under which the supreme sacrifice can be justified. He says:

“ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ ॥”

(ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੫੮੦)

*“Dying is the privilege of those brave men, who die on having become acceptable i.e. having become worthy, by first dying to the self”.* (Guru Nanak, in Wadhans)

Again,

“ਜੀਵਤੁ ਮਰੈ ਸੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਪਿਰ ਸਚੜੈ ਹੇਤਿ ਪਿਆਰੈ ॥”

(ਵਡਹੰਸ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੫੮੦)

*“He, who dieth to the self, dieth truly. Then, he loveth the True One”.* (Guru Nanak, in Wadhans)

Thus, it is not enough, for this purpose, to be merely brave. Have not many brave men, been scoundrels?



The privilege goes not to a mere warrior, but to a warrior, who is also a saint, i.e. who besides being brave, has died to the self, and has thus become exalted, on the moral and the spiritual planes. Sometimes, dishonest and unscrupulous people are brave, and make sacrifices too, to advance causes, but their sacrifices are not approved, because they do not know the art of true living, from which alone can true suffering emerge. And a man lives truly if he is humble, truthful, loving, honest, compassionate, forbearing and patient. Bhai Gurdas had said:

“ਸਾਬਰੁ ਸਿਦਕਿ ਸਹੀਦੁ ਭਰਮ ਭਉ ਖੋਵਣਾ ।”

(ਵਾਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ)

“A martyr is one who hath faith, in the cause, and, hath patience, and is without fear of any kind, and without doubt, in his mind, about the cause”. (Var, Bhai Gurdas Ji)

The Guru himself too, had said:

“ਸਬਦਿ ਮਰੈ ਫਿਰਿ ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਮੁਏ ਕਿਉ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਇ ॥  
ਪਰਪੰਚਿ ਵਿਆਪਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਮਨੁ ਦੇਇ ॥ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਰਾਇਣੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਹੋਇ ॥”  
(ਗਉੜੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੫੩)

“When a man dieth, to the self, through the Word, i.e. through the Guru's teachings, he dieth not again (i.e. He becometh deathless), and without this kind of death, how can one attain to perfection? The human mind is engrossed in Duality. It becometh permanent, if the Lord, Who is Permanent, maketh it so”.

(Guru Nanak, in Gauri)

Again, for true dying, one is not only brave and saintly, but fights for the right cause, and is ready even to lay down life, if the cause is great and approved, and demands that kind of sacrifice. This means that life is not to be staked, over a small matter, but for dharma only:

“ਸੂਰਾ ਸੇ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀਐ ਜੁ ਲਰੈ ਦੀਨ ਕੇ ਹੇਤ ॥”

(ਮਾਰੂ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ, ਅੰ: ੧੧੦੫)

*"Truly brave is he, who fighteth for Dharma".*

*(Kabir, in Maru)*

To express the above theme, in a nutshell, we may quote saint Kabir, once again:

*"ਜਹਜੇ ਮਰੈ ਅਮਰੁ ਹੋਇ ਸੋਈ ॥"* *(ਗਉੜੀ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ)*

*"One who dieth in Sehaj, i.e. dieth to the self, dieth truly and becometh deathless."* *(Kabir, in Gauri)*

And, he alone can lay down life truly, who first lives truly i.e. live, works and suffers for Truth, and for nothing but Truth. Dying to the self has thus to be worked out, in one's life, as the Guru himself had done, in the way, we had examined, from a Sakhi of his life. The Sakhi illustrates, how beautifully he had worked it out, in his own great life. He had become a living martyr, by first dying to the self. Out of Death, to the self, then, springs the life of the Self.

We may note here, once again, the words, which Guru Nanak had addressed to the Yogis, a number of times, thus:

*"ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀਵਤਿਆ ਮਰਿ ਰਹੀਐ ਐਸਾ ਜੋਗੁ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥"*  
*(ਸੁਹੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੭੩੦)*

*"Nanak, let there be death to the self, in the midst of life. That is the real Yoga, to be practiced, in life"*  
*(Guru Nanak, in Suhi)*

Then, one possesses sweetness, love, humility, compassion and forgiveness. And, let us remember, that it is this kind of life that produces martyrs:

*"ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣੁ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥ ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥"*  
*(ਸਲੋਕ ਮਹਲਾ ੧, ਅੰ: ੧੪੧੨)*

*"If thou art keen, to play the game of love, come to my path, with thy head, on thy palm"*.

*(Shalok of Guru Nanak)*

*From the book views of Guru Nanak Dev's Life amplified by*

*Narain Singh*

## Many Difficulties en Route to Truth

*Guru Nanak ruthlessly denounced the concept of Sach or religious purity that was employed by most of our religious traditions to divide the society into pure and impure, into higher and lower classes, even into male and female.*

### Harjeet Singh Gill

The cosmic vision of Baba Nanak is presented in the opening statement of *Japji*. There is but one unique Creator—who is beyond time and space, who has no form or figure. This Creator is denominated as Sach, Truth. In the beginning was Truth. It is the rhyme and reason of all ages: past, present and future. When it will be all over, this Sublime Truth will inhabit the Cosmos, the *Brahmand*.

“Sach khand wasse Nirankar”. The Nirankar, the Formless, dwells in the realm of Sach, the Truth. In the associational dialectic, where there is Sach, there is *Nirankar* or where there is *Nirankar*, there is Sach. Sach and *Nirankar* are equivalent concepts. They can never be disassociated. In *sidh Gosht*, when the *Siddhas* ask: “*Kis wakhar ke tum wanjare*”, quick comes the reply: “*Sach wakhar ke hum wanjare*”. Baba Nanak was in communion with the Truth. He surcharged the whole universe with this Sublime Truth. He lived in and fought for Truth in every action, in every faction. In the very beginning of the dialogue, after the usual salutations, Baba Nanak delineates His discourse: “*Kia bhawie Sach suchha hoe, Sach sabad bin mukt na koe*”. Wandering in jungles with all metaphysical precautions and austerities leads you nowhere. It is a wild goose chase that has led many ascetics astray. The concept of *Sach*, religious purity—that was employed by most of our religious traditions to



divide the society into pure and impure, into higher and lower classes, even into male and female—was ruthlessly denounced by Baba Nanak. It is only *Sach* that is the criterion of all classifications, of all such divisions. In the same *Sidh Gosht*, Baba Nanak says: "*Sach bina suucha ko nahi*". "The ultimate criterion, the sublime concept of Truth, is the only criterion that differentiates the pure from the impure, the sacred from the profane'.

### **What the times demanded**

In 17th-century France, Jean-Jacques Rousseau explained the ills of his times in terms of an imagined history of mankind. Once upon a time, human beings lived in jungles, in nature, where there were no families, no haves, no have-nots. There was no concept of mine and yours. Then began the struggle and strife over property, over areas of domination that led to the creation of different classes, of rulers and ruled, of conquerors and the conquered. And slowly it continued until the modern times. All our inequalities and discriminations are due to this progression in history.

A little later, another French philosopher, Etienne de Condillac, followed the same discursive strategy to explain the problems of the understanding of the language. In the beginning, at the zero state of language, a word corresponds to a given object. As the linguistic community grows, the particular names, signifiers, refer to a number of similar but not identical objects, as the word, man, for numerous men, all different from each other. From the concrete references, we move on to abstract words, truth, beauty, justice. With the same signifiers we refer to a number or similar objects, referents, universals. The creativity of the author lies in creating different conceptual



contexts to underscore specific significations. This is how we attempt at discerning the discourse of *Japji* which is a unique construct, a conceptual construct with a series of micro concepts, the *Paurian*, whose context enables us to arrive at the true significance of Baba Nanak's enunciations.

### **New social constructs**

In the 15th century, Baba Nanak, in Raag Maru in *Arbad Narbad Dhundukara*, composed the historiography of the *Brahmand*: "*Arbad narbad dhundukara/dharn na gagana hukam apara/na din rain na chand na suraj sun samadh lagaeda...*"

It means 'Long, long ago, millions of years ago, it was all dark, all silent and sombre. There was no earth, no sky, no sun, no moon, no day, no night. None came, none left. There was no growth, no decay. There were neither men nor women, neither castes, nor creeds, neither sins nor sorrow. There was neither fasting, nor penance, neither austerities nor absentions...There was neither Gorakh nor Macchandrar, neither endless disputes nor futile discussions. There were neither Khattris nor Brahmins, neither elaborate ceremonies nor deceptive rituals. There were neither *mullahs* nor *qazis*, neither *sheikhs* nor *hajis*, neither tyrants nor victims, neither prides nor humiliations...And when He willed, it all came to be, in all its mysteries and extinctions, all the gods and goddesses, and with them all the snares of *maya*...Rare were those who discerned the word of *Nirankar*, who perceived the Will of the Creator. They were blessed; they lived in his Sublime Truth, the Sublime Sach'.

In other words, as the creation progressed, as the social, political and religious structures evolved,

we witness a series of progressive degenerations. The inequalities, the cruelties, the corruptions, the superstitions, the endless disputes in religious sects, led to modern social constructs. The superficial dialectical engagements and the deliberately infused contradictions led to conflicts and confusions. As a result, what we have today is "*Kurh raja kurh parja kurh sab sansaar*". "The ruler, the ruled, the world at large, all are rotten". The moon of Truth is hidden under the darkness of ignorance, of untruth, of *Kurh*. This conceptual opposition of *Sach* and *Kurh* has prevailed in every sphere of human activity. But after this ruthless condemnation comes the optimist enunciation." "*kurh nikhute Nanka orak sach rahi*." 'Ultimately', proclaims Nanak, 'Sach will triumph'.

### Critique of the times

The discourse of Baba Nanak covers another very important theme in every religious disputation. It refers to *Dukh*, suffering. In Buddhism, it is the central concept. It is the beginning of its spiritual reflection and all efforts, physical austerities and penances are preoccupied with this paradox. Baba Nanak's reflection on this theme is diametrically opposed to this understanding. For him, *Dukh daru Sukh rog bhaia*. *Dukh* is remedy, *Sukh* is disease. *Dukh* leads to meditation, reflection and sublimation, *Sukh* leads to indulgence, luxury and degeneration. *Diwa mera ek naam Dukh wich paia tel*. The lamp of meditation is lit by the oil of *Dukh*. And he continues to elaborate this highly complex conceptual construct by saying: "*Sagle Dukh amrit kar piwe bahurh Dukh na paeda*". "The devotee drinks the Nectar of *Dukh* to eradicate suffering forever'. And finally, at a transcendental level of reflection, Baba Nanak simply abolishes the binary opposition of

*Dukh/Sukh* by declaring that the being should reflect upon *Dukh/Sukh* as two equivalent existential states of mind, "*Dukh Sukh sam kar jane*".

### **Denouncing rituals**

The discourse operates at two levels: the empirical and the transcendental. At the empirical level, we have his reactions to the affairs of this world this world of conflicts and confusion, this world of extreme inequalities and injustices. Wherever there is tyranny and cruelty, he raises his voice for the downtrodden, for the victim. In no uncertain terms, he condemns the invasion of his country by Babur. *He pleads for the rightful status of women in our social structure. He ruthlessly denounces any discrimination based on gender or race. His critique knows no bounds when it comes to the false rituals and ceremonies that deceive the common humanity in the name of religion.* He categorically denounces all *Rehat Maryada* of the Brahmins, *yogis*, *Siddhas* and other sects of different religions. What matters for Baba Nanak is *Sach*, the Sublime Truth that is the rhyme and reason of all life, of all creation, of the *Brahmand*. *Sati santokh, sahaj, sanjam...* Truth, steady serenity and sobriety are the conceptual hallmarks of his theology.

### **The ultimate Truth**

Finally, we come to the Cosmic, transcendental level. It is at the level of discerning, of comprehension that all binary oppositions are resolved. At the empirical level, there is birth and death: "*Jo aia so chalsi*"; at the cosmic level, "*Na ko aawe na ko jae*", even in, "*Na ko hoia na ko hoe*". "*None comes none leaves*". In fact, the very differentiation of existence and non-existence is obliterated. More emphatically: "*Na hau na main na hou howan*", 'Neither



I was, nor' I am, nor will I be'. It is interesting to follow his reflection on the human condition of male/female dichotomy: "*Purkh mainh naar, naar mainh purkha, bujhohu brahm gyani*". "There is in every male, elements of female and in every female, elements of male; this mystery can be discerned only by the *Brahm Gyanis*, the wisest'. In other words, this binary opposition is resolved. They are simply human beings. Modern psycho-analysis has affirmed what Baba Nanak proclaimed 550 years ago.

In Raag Ramkali, Baba Nanak tells the yogis: "*Aasti naasti eko nao*". To believe or not to believe is one and the same thing'. This is the transcendental level of discernment where such distinctions become meaningless. Whether one believes in the eternity of spirit, *advaita*, or in the eternity of matter, *samkhya*, (in the Western tradition, Plato/Aristotle), this conceptual opposition is resolved in the transcendental dialectic. This is the level of meditation, going beyond observation, perception and reflection, going beyond the contradictions of this empirical world, where we arrive at the unique, spiritual, existential state of sach, of sublime truth: "*Aad Sach, Jugaad Sach, Hai Bhi Sach, Nanak Hosi Bhi Sach.*"

The writer is Professor Emeritus,  
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(*The Tribune*, 3 November 2019)



# Guru Nanak Dev Was A Social Reformer

Balbir Singh Bhasin

According to Sikhism, no sage has authority over an individual's conscience and as such it cannot impose a particular type of philosophy-religious or atheistic-on the people through political force. Such an attempt can only create a monolithic society at war with itself. The duty of the State is to work for the greatest happiness of the people; maintain law and order, plan for progress and engage in social justice. In doing all this, it must be guided by ethics and this is what Sikhism advocates.

Sikhism's governing belief in virtuous conduct is the guide to reach ultimate reality. Pride, infatuation, greed, maliciousness and other temptations are contingent; one should not cling to them, but embrace an altruistic life.

*Moral rejuvenation and regeneration was the aim of Guru Nanak. He stated that life is a trust and it is to be spent in the love and service of humanity. Service to humanity is service to God.*

Truthful living is the essence of God-consciousness and in achieving this, one's company and association plays an important role. One achieves and grows into the supreme position by joining the congregation of saints, but one who is in bad company stands to face trial in the court of God. Guru Nanak says, "Truth is Supreme."

Those who tried to disseminate divine knowledge faced strong opposition, and ill treatment including torture, but due to the strength of their character based on their truthful living, they never gave up.

The editor of 'Sikh Review', a journal of Sikhism, said, "Across the wide world Sikhs know that the next calendar year, 2019, will mark the 550th birth anniversary

of the founder, Sri Guru Nanak Dev, Sikhs, as well as other who have faith in the Guru's teachings are anxiously waiting for the auspicious day to celebrate in a big way."

Hence, the question: What would be the best way for both the community and individual to mark the anniversary? Should it be observed in the same ritualistic, traditional manner, spending huge amounts of money and energy with little or no positive outcome for the betterment of the community at large? Of course, kirtan darbars, prabhat pheries, nagar kirtans and also large scale langars will be performed to showcase panthic commitment, but will responsible Sikh commitment, and responsible Sikh institutions rise to the occasion and help to spread Guru Nanak's humanitarian messages? If Guru Nanak could travel in four directions-across national boundaries-to disseminate the message of universal brotherhood in a simple but effective way more than five centuries ago, why should not the Sikhs continue that mission today?

When asked by Muslims in Madina, 'Are you Hindu or Muslim', Guru Nanak replied, "Na main Hindu, na Musalman, Nanak jagg ke jee pran" and he also said, "Ek pita ekas ke hum barak"- 'We are children of one God'. Guru Nanak has always been performing different acts for the benefit of people and he always helped them overcome bad manners and degraded acts and encouraged people to think positively, free of grudges and prejudices. He said in a shabad in Gurubani while praising the role of woman in society: "So kyun manda aakhiye, jitt jamme rajan"- How can we criticize woman who gives birth to saints and avatars of all religions?

*(The Times of India, 27 November 2018)*

## **‘Equity and Equality Guru Nanak’s Basic Message’**

**Dr. Manmohan Singh**

Societies worldwide are facing the challenges of terrorism and environmental degradation. What can we draw from the teachings of Guru Nanak to tide over these?

Three things in Guru Nanak’s life are very important. First is his emphasis on gender equality. Guru Nanak wanted men and women to be treated equality and his message was “so kyun manda aakhiye jit janmain rajjan”. Today in our own country atrocities against women and children are on the increase. It is, therefore, necessary to take Guru Nanak’s message to all nooks and corners of the country to emphasise the need for paying adequate attention to the wellbeing of our women and children.

Guru Nanak laid great emphasis on the protection of environment—water, air and Mother Earth. We end Japuji Sahib with a reference to the need to protect environment. The challenge is to live in harmony with nature.

*Thirdly, the Guru emphasized the need for inter-faith harmony and sustained dialogue among religions and religious communities. He travelled the world to promote the culture of dialogue among various religious groups, whether it was the yogis of the Himalayas or the maulvis of Mecca.*

*His message is that all religions have merit and it is necessary to learn from each other to ensure harmonious living. This message of Guru Nanak is as relevant today as it was when he lived.*

The Guru preached a world without boundaries but we are living in a world increasingly defined by boundaries. Is this why the world is moving away from his teachings?



Well, the world will have to come back to the path shown by Guru Nanak Dev ji. It is true there is so much strife in our country, so many religious disputes and caste rivalries. These are not conducive to harmonious living and, therefore, the message of Guru Nanak of promoting inter-faith dialogue and harmony is paramount. Guru Nanak said 'naa koi Hindu naa Musalman'. Everyone is to be judged by what one does in his life.

*Guru Nanak lived for the poor and shared his earnings. But world is becoming increasingly self-centred...*

The basic message of Guru Nanak is equity and equality. Therefore, equitable distribution of income and wealth is an integral part of the teachings of Sikh Gurus. Equitable distribution of income, dealing constructively with social and economic inequalities, is integral to the message Guru Nanak gave to the world.

*Radicalism has been on the rise across the world. Is there a lesson to be drawn from Guru's teachings?*

All sorts of fundamentalism are inconsistent with the message of Guru Nanak and other Sikh Gurus. Caste barriers were decried by the Guru. He emphasized equality of human beings and, therefore, the need for promoting inter-faith dialogue.

So you are saying that inter-faith dialogue is the best solution to religious fundamentalism?

Yes, that is the only solution.

*Guru Nanak established the city of Kartarpur where there was harmony of every kind. Do you think such a society is possible today?*

I think technology has brought new challenges. I don't believe we can reverse the march of technology, and with technology comes growing urbanization. I don't think we can bring back the type of model Guru Nanak



Dev ji showed and worked on in Kartarpur. But his message of 'kirat karna, wand chhakna, naam japna' is as relevant in modern society as it was during Guru Nanak's time. The basic message is still valid for the wellbeing of humankind.

*You youth appear to be increasingly losing touch with religion and spirituality... your thoughts?*

My message to the youth is they must get away from the path of drugs, which is destroying the vitality of the youth of Punjab. The path shown by Guru Nanak can lead us to a life of piety and self-control, which is essential for harmonious living.

*Are lack of jobs and economic strife also reasons why youth are unable to turn to spirituality?*

Joblessness is a major problem affecting our young. This problem must be tackled frontally.

*What does religion mean to you personally?*

It means being a good citizen, trying to do my duty and leading a life of dignity and self-respect.

Do you think religious identities and religious symbolism are important?

Well, we cannot wish away symbolism but it need not be used to promote destructive ends.

*Sikhism has spread worldwide because of the Sikh diaspora. What would you say to the Sikhs living outside India?*

The Sikhs are today an international community, found in every part of the world. And where there is a Sikh, there is a gurdwara. Gurdwara is also a place where the tradition of langar, feeding the hungry regardless of their religion and caste, is still practiced. To the Sikhs living outside India, my message would be that they have an obligation to be good Sikhs and good citizens of the countries to which they have migrated because their conduct

will influence people's judgement about the community. And, therefore, it is very important for the diaspora, the Sikhs in particular, to set an example of nobility and good living, practicing teaching of the Gurus.

It is also necessary in our own country to ensure that our religious institutions are not misused to promote religious hatred.

*What according to you is the role of the SGPC?*

The SGPC is the supreme religious institution of the Sikhs. It must, therefore, guide the Sikh community to follow the righteous path shown by our Gurus.

Punjab has just seen an attack on Nirankari Bhavan in Amritsar on the eve of the 550th Parkash Utsav. Do you see this as an attempt to revive militancy in the state?

Terrorism is the enemy of humanity and, therefore, it is the responsibility of all to work for its elimination. No problems are solved by resorting to terrorism and it is, therefore, necessary that all our institutions—political, religious and social—are mobilized to deal with the scourge of terrorism.

Punjab has suffered a great deal in the past and it will be a very sad day if terrorism takes root in Punjab again.

Politics is being played out even on Parkash Utsav. The SGPC and the Punjab Government are organising their own functions. All this when the Guru preached unity...

My feeling is that all segments of the Sikh society and other religious communities, whether Hindu or Muslims, Guru Nanak was common to all. Guru Nanak's message has universal validity and this must be an occasion to unite all communities in promoting the cult of good and honest living among our people.

*(The Tribune, 23 November 2018)*

# Gurbani Reflects his Educational Philosophy

Upinder Swahney

Guru Nanak's writings do not explicitly mention his thoughts on education, but there is a lot which implicitly brings out his philosophy on education. Many aspects of modern education are a part of his writings, including the application of scientific temper in one's routine life and his views on the status of women in society.

In his hymn *Vidya vichari tan parupkari*, Nanak emphasized that if you desire to acquire true knowledge, make people's welfare your aim in life. He encouraged the setting up of schools, attached to every religious place, to educate children. He defied the belief that women were inferior or weaker than men. Pained by the low status accorded to women in society, he said: "*So kyun manda aakhiye jit jamme rajaani*" (Why look down upon women who give birth to men, including the kings).

## **Stress on scientific temper**

The modern-day emphasis of education on the development of scientific temper was visible in his preaching and writing. Scientific temper is a way of life. It is an attitude which involves the application of logic. Elements of fairness, equality and democracy are built upon it. Guru Nanak's observations regarding wearing a sacred thread, *joneyu*, sending water to one's forefathers and several other rituals, his emphasis on discussion, argument and analysis are vital parts of scientific temper. He was in favour of logical reasoning and against blind following. He emphasized that the role of education was to impart wisdom, which brings clarity of thought.

## **Travelling and learning**

Travelling was an essential part of Guru Nanak's life. His long travels, known as *udasis*, also point towards the present day focus of education on travelling and learning. Education, according to Guru Nanak's philosophy, is not



gathering information but attaining self-realization and becoming conscious about the societal ills like dishonesty, greed, corruption, discrimination on the basis of gender, caste, religion, etc. **He emphasized that discussions and arguments in educational sphere were worthless if the deeper meaning of life was not understood.** Thus, for Guru Nanak, mere book learning was not education.

Guru Nanak distinguished between an educated and enlightened person and the one who's merely literate. For an educated person, knowledge does not end at memory or understanding but is embodied in his behaviour and character. According to him, *sach tan par janiye janridhe sach a hoye*, i.e., truth is higher than everything but higher still is truthful living and a pure heart.

Guru Nanak's thoughts suggest that the aim of education was the harmonious development of personality, to draw the best from body and mind. He emphasized that education is for self-realization and physical, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and spiritual development of a human being. Guru Nanak's *Gurbani* (hymns) reflect his educational philosophy, which is the development of scientific outlook, artistic vision, creative attitude, moral and spiritual strength and realization of truth.

To conclude, Guru Nanak considers education as a source of illumination and power. It transforms the nature of a human being by the progressive development of his physical, intellectual and spiritual powers. According to Guru Nanak, education prepares a person for complete living, and he clearly emphasized that one did not have to denounce the worldly desires and pleasures in order to attain enlightenment. Living a normal human life with honesty and compassion is the application of education and knowledge.

—The writer is coordinator UGC-SAR  
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(*The Tribune*, 10 November 2010)



## Revolutionary Thinker & Humanitarian

### Nadia Singh

Guru Nanak is hailed as a champion of humanism. However, a little known aspect of his philosophy is its distinct "eco-sophical" tradition. This tradition has profound lessons in chartering a path of sustainable development, especially in the face of the current socio-ecological crisis facing humanity. Guru Nanak's understanding of the socio-economic and ecological constructs of society mirrors the concept of the "three pillars of sustainability"—**social equity, environmental protection and economic well-being**. It has been recognized by international agencies like the United Nations that these three pillars are fundamental to the creation of inclusive, environment friendly societies. Guru Nanak's writing reveal that he had an astute knowledge of the interdependence between the social, ecological and the economic realms of life. He provided a new vision to his followers, wherein all the three realms work in harmony with each other. Guru Nanak was a lover of nature, and recognized the inherent link between the human and the non-human world. At the same time, he was cognizant, of the societal ills associated with greed, materialism and appropriation of wealth. He established an alternative model of development based on community sharing, voluntary service and pooling of resources in the society he established at Kartarpur. The most fundamental aspect of his vision was its focus on egalitarianism. He strove to protect the interests of the most marginalized and vulnerable sections of society.

**Nature, Part of The Creator**

Guru Nanak's thinking on environment differs from other Bhakti philosophers of the time, who treat

Nature as primarily an object of worship. In contrast, his writings focus on nature as a part of the creator, implying that caring for nature and its preservation is essentially a form of worship. Several passages in Guru Granth Sahib elucidate this fact. The most famous of these is, "*Air is our teacher, water our father and the great earth our mother, day and night are the male and female nurses.*" Guru Nanak also displayed an astute awareness of the "dialectical" relationship between the human and the non-human world so that one cannot survive without the other. He writes, "*You yourself the bumble bee, the follower, the fruit and the tree. You yourself the big fish, tortoise and the cause of causes.*" This understanding of the relationship between humans and Nature is reflective of ideas in modern day ecology. In his famous *aarti*, he evokes the image of the entire universe as participating in worship and compares the grandeur of creation with the small scale of the Hindu form of worship of lighting an *aarti* (flame).

Guru Nanak's philosophy displayed a keen insight into the inter-linkages between the social and ecological aspects of life. He was a revolutionary thinker who recognized that all humans are essentially composed of matter, "*Born out of flesh, in flesh does man live*". He condemned the purification rituals espoused in the *Manusmritis* as meaningless and merely a means to give divine sanction to the injustice and humiliation by one section of the society to another. Even as a child, he challenged the practice of caste superiority and ritualism, associated with the practice of wearing the Hindu sacred thread, *janeu*. He asked the priest, "What difference would it make?" When he did not get a satisfactory answer, he

refused to do so and proclaimed, *"It is righteous deeds that distinguish one person from another."* He went on to say. *"Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, continence the knot and truth the twist. This is the sacred thread of the soul and if thou has it, O priest then put it on me."* Guru Nanak emphasized that all humans are created equal and should be bestowed with equal rights, irrespective of caste and gender.

### **Champion of equality**

Guru Nanak was born in a pre-capitalist society. However, he was keenly aware of the fact that materialism and appropriation of wealth are hurdles in the creation of an egalitarian, ecologically friendly society. He denounced *moh* (materialism) and *lobh* (avarice) as the primal sins and equated them to pollution. *"Pollution of the mind is greed; the pollution of the eyes is to look with covetousness upon another's wealth; the pollution of the ears is to listen to slander."*

He was a vociferous critic of the imperialist tendencies of the Mughal Empire. Addressing his acolyte, Bhai Lalo, he wrote, *"Babar leading a weeding array of sin hath descended from Kabul and demanded by force the bride, O' Lalo."* He also expressed anguish at the treatment of women following Babar's invasion, while being incarcerated in Sayyidpur prison, *"The Muslim women read the Koran and in suffering call upon God, O'Lalo. The Hindu women of high caste and others of low caste may also put in the same account, O'Lalo."*

Nanak went on long travels (*udasis*), but did not advocate asceticism. Instead, he focused strongly on giving back to the community. He wrote, *"Asceticism lies*

*in remaining pure amidst impurities.*” At the end of his first *udassi*, around 1521, he built a community in Kartarpur as a model of a sustainable society. It was based on the three pillars of *sangat*, *pangat* and *langar* to promote community ownership, voluntary service and pooling of resources. Guru Nanak said, “They alone who live by the fruit of their own labour and share its fruit with others have found the right path.” The practice of *langar* became one of the hallmarks of the community in Kartarpur and promoted social solidarity. It also acted as a direct blow to the caste system and untouchability. In a fitting tribute to Guru Nanak, the *langar* has become the cornerstone of the Barcelona World Parliament of Religions held every year.

Guru Nanak’s life and teachings provide a vision for the creation of a sustainable, egalitarian community, which has great relevance in today’s times. Unfortunately, his legacy has not been sufficiently followed in praxis by the Sikh community. His vision of holistic development through the integration of social, economic and ecological realms is yet to be realised. **As a whole the Sikh community has still to become the model of a casteless, egalitarian, community driven, environmentally conscious society, which Guru Nanak had envisioned.**

—The writer is a teacher in Economics,  
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*(The Tribune, 10 November, 2019)*



## Sage with a Scientific Vision

*While the Guru's teachings are in compatibility with the latest in science, we are still mired in blind faith*

**Dr. Kuldip Singh Dhir**

The very fact that we are celebrating the 550th birthday of Guru Nanak underlines that he is part of recent history. Recount 20 generations back and you are with him. His life span (1469-1539 AD) is age of renaissance. History mentions two renowned scientists as his contemporaries. These are Leonardo da Vinci (1453-1519 AD) from Italy and Nikolause Copernicus (1473-1543 AD) from Poland. Inventor and engineer Vinci is known more as a sculptor and painter. Copernicus unravelled cosmological mysteries and proposed heliocentric theory. His universe was, however, restricted to the Sun and the six known planets of his times. History makes no mention of the Guru having visited Italy and Poland or having a dialogue with either of the two scientists. Yet scientific insights, which dot his hymns frequently, long before Bruno, Galileo, Copernicus or Vinci, are mind boggling. This is what makes it imperative to look seriously into his relationship with new science.

### Of Unending Diversities

*Guru Nanak does not stake any claim to being a scientist. He claims to be a humble minstrel singing paeans of God. He is wonderstruck by the infinite expanse of the universe, astounding variety of creatures, meticulous design all around and orderly working of the whole network. The unending diversities emanating from the One and merging into it exhilarate him. Colours, scents, forms rivers oceans, mountains, forests, stars—the whole creation fills him with ecstasy.*

Guru Nanak presented his concept of creator with alphanumeric *Ek Onkar*, which appears in wondrous

colours, forms, forces, particles and equations working in the limits of eternal laws of His order i.e. *Hukam*. This order has been inscribed and prescribed by him right from the start. We discover these laws but have no option except working within their constraints. *Hukam razai chalna Nanak likhiya naal...* Guru Nanak asserts that it is not possible to fathom the frontiers of the universe because there are myriads of earths, skies, stars and galaxies. *Khand patal asankh main ganat na hoi... Eh ant na jamai koi, patala lakh akasha akash.*

### Creation Of Universe

Guru Nanak proclaims that God himself creates and dissolves such universes ad infinitum. *Dhohe dhah usare appe*. Nobody can vouchsafe when He created this universe of ours except Him... *Ja karta sirthi ko saje appe jaane soi*. He is the only truth surviving beyond our categories of present past and future. He was there even before creation of time. Time and space are not eternal but his creations are: *Keeye raat dinnaut choj vidanaya*. Universe popped up from the primal void (*sun*). In his hymn, Maru Solhe, he proclaims that universe, man, moon, sun, earth, all elements and all gods were created by the lord from sun. He is emphatic about the endless spread of the universe with countless continents, solar systems and underworlds: *Tithe khand mandal varbhand. Je ko kathe ta ant na ant*. Hubble and many modern cosmologists have endorsed it.

Guru Nanak postulates that universe was created from a singularity of zero space and infinite density. *Sunno dharat akash upaye*. His views have been explained theoretically on the basis of quantum theory. His pronouncement about the creation of the universe at his call is in sync with the Big Bang Theory, which has been validated by the discovery of remnants of cosmic background radiation in 1964.



## Life On Earth

Guru Nanak informs that there is no difference between the formless *Nirguna* and manifest Sargun, God. It is his dual nature as if He was energy and matter both simultaneously. The observer can visualize Him in whichever form He chooses. This concept is consistent with the dual behaviour of matter in the quantum world. It is particle as well as wave. Guru's statements about the origin of life on Earth are equally scientific. Chronologically there were gases at the start. These formed water and water gave birth to life: *Sache te pawna bhaya pawne te jal hoe. Jal te tribhawan sajiya ghat ghat jot samoi*. He believes in the development of life on Earth through evolution. He asserts that the homosapiens have been lifeless stones for ages. Guru Arjan elucidated these views saying: For aeons we've been worms and insects. For aeons we've been fish, horse and elephants.

Guru Nanak says no two individuals are alike though all have emanated from him: *Ikat roop phire parchhana koi na kis hi jeha*. This uniqueness of individuals has been ratified by the DNA theorists. Guru Nanak remarks that the male contains the seeds of female and the female that of male both sharing the responsibility for the gender of the child. This fact finds veracity at chromosomal level today where we see that the female has XX chromosomes and the male has XY chromosomes in their reproductive kitty.

Guru Nanak makes a remarkable observation about the innumerably large numbers of subtle elements in our body: *Is kaya andar vast asankha*. Three billion nucleotides in genome of each of our fifty trillion cells confirms it. Genetic research indicates that the process of ageing and shortening of telomeres i.e. knots at the ends of chromosomes go hand in hand. Guru Nanak points it

out saying: *Chhije deh khule ik gundh.*

It is significant to note that Guru Nanak is conscious of continuous movement at the micro and macro levels. He asserts that the Sun, moon, earth, sky and galaxies are in non-stop motion: *Bhai vich suraj bhai vich chand, Koh karori chalt na ant.* Galaxies, stars and universes are spread without any solid pillars. The formless sky is just an invisible canopy of space-time again without any solid support or strings: *Bin thamma jagat rahaye... Bajh kala adan rahaya.* General theory of relativity, concept of gravity and gravitational waves are often explained with this metaphor. He points out further that the moon has no light of its own. Sunlight falling on it makes it shine: *Sas ghar sur vase mite andhyara.*

### The Many Myths

Guru Nanak questions the orthodox belief of an ox supporting the earth. He asks if the ox supports the earth, what support the ox and where does the unending chain stop. He is emphatic about all the forces emerging out of the one., lending support to some sort of grand unified theory: *jeh dekho teh eko eka...* Scientists, right from the times of Einstein, Salam and Feynman, are making frantic efforts to develop such a theory of everything. The holistic organic unity of nature has been underlined by Guru Nanak and vindicated by new science.

Guru Nanak dismisses the impurity called *sutak* attached to women due to menstruation and childbirth. He also ridicules the impurity called *patak* attached with death. He argues: *Jamn marna hukam hai bhane ave jaye and sab ho sutak bharm hai.* He contends that there is life in every grain of crop. If water gives life to every creature, why not call it as the primal creature. He attaches great significance to air, water and soil as prime ingredients of life equating these with guru, father and mother respectively. This



shows his seriousness regarding environmental concerns about which we are still not conscious enough.

Our universe has been designed with constants, laws and equations fixed so precisely that even the slightest change in any of these would result in collapse of our universe. The true Lord himself is perfect and complete. The universe created by Him is also true and perfect: *Ih jag sache ki hai kothri sache ka vich vas...* And Sache tere khand sache brahmand. Stephen Hawking appreciates the elaborate design of universe but stops short of accepting the existence of a designer behind it, Guru Nanak, however, is emphatic about the grand design being the handiwork of a perfect designer.

### **Fighting Superstitions**

Guru Nanak was unorthodox in his approach to natural phenomena. Reference could be made here about two historical events which occurred in his lifetime. The first concerns the solar eclipse of January 13, 1507. He was in Kurukshetra that day. Throwing all orthodoxy to winds, he made fire and cooked food publically, convincing the crowds about the futility of such beliefs. The second one concerns the appearance of Halley's Comet in 1531. He ridiculed the fear attributed to this long-tailed star. He transformed it into an omen of good fortune which flashes in our mind when we live a life devoid of ego following the advice of Guru: *Nanak haumain maar patine tara chrhya lamma.*

Guru Nanak's life, teachings and *bani* are all in compatibility with the latest in new science. It is sad that we are still mired in indiscriminate blind faith and Babas of various hues are befooling us all around.

—The writer is former Dean, Faculty of Languages, Punjabi University

(*The Tribune*, 10 November 2019)

# Not What Guru Nanak Taught

Col. H.P Singh (Retd.)

As we celebrate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, my mind is in awe of one of the greatest religious thinkers ever born in the subcontinent. Accredited with setting up a distinctive social and spiritual platform, his teachings are anchored in virtue, equality, goodness and love. '*Phir uthi akhir sada touheed ki Punjab se, Hind ko ek mard-e-kamil ne jagaya khwab se* (Again from the Punjab the call of monotheism arose, a perfect man roused India from slumber), said Allama Iqbal, the legendary Urdu poet in his praise of the founder of the fifth largest religion of the world.

Guru Nanak succeeded in awakening the masses, but half a millennium later, sadly the symptoms of relapse of the messes into superstition, intolerance and ritualism are hard to conceal. *Ik Onkar*, the oneness of universe and monotheism in its absoluteness, lay at the core of his philosophy. He attempted to connect man to God through the path of spirituality, thereby relegating organized religion to just another means of crowd control.

Fast-forward to the 21st century and one is dismayed at what remains of his message. The self-appointed 'messengers of God' have assumed the role of middlemen. As spirituality takes a backseat, religion has become an effective tool of dividing people and inciting hatred. It is *deja vu*, as dharma has once again 'taken wings and flown away', as the Guru had lamented seeing the state of affairs in the Punjab of the 16th century—'*Kal kaati rajey kasai, dharam pankh ka ood rahiya*'.

Guru Nanak spent a lifetime trying to get the two faiths to live in harmony. '*Na koi Hindu na Mussalman*'

is arguably one of his first sermons. Ironically, his own land of five rivers has been partitioned beyond any scope of reconciliation. So deep has been the divide that one of the descendants of Mardana, lifelong companion of Guru Nanak, Rababi Ghulam Mohammad of Lahore, was once dissuaded from reciting kirtan because he professed a different faith. The outwardly appearance of Guru Nanak's followers has taken precedence over the awakening of the inner being for self-actualization, taking out the very soul from his teaching.

It is a paradox of sorts that the Guru's final resting place is on the fault lines of a clash of ideologies—'*Shama-e-haq se jo munawwar ho ye who mehfil na thi, barish-e-rehmat hui lekin zameen qabil na thi*' (Perhaps this was not the appropriate assembly which would appreciate the lamp of truth, rain of mercy did fall but the land turned out to be barren).

It is nonetheless heartening that the two regimes on either side of the Radcliffe divide are trying to make the celebrations a success. The Kartarpur corridor has given hope of actuating the Guru's dream. But if his message is not really understood, this bridging of gaps between people will remain yet another case of superficial symbolism.

*(The Tribune, 29 October, 2019)*

# Reflections of the Knowledge Society in Philosophy of Guru Nanak Dev

Prof. (Dr.) Harpreet Kaur

## Knowledge Society

The present day society is a *Knowledge society* with knowledge as the propelling factor. Information and knowledge dissemination to all the sections of society is the basic premise for improving human conditions. Since times immemorial, knowledge gathering and dissemination has resulted from an incessant quest of the humans for acquiring and accumulating knowledge that was passed from one generation to another. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has set in a revolution and this process has speeded up tremendously. *The Social Theory of Knowledge Society* is based on the premise that how knowledge is an impelling factor in all the facets of the society including economic, political and cultural dimensions. The knowledge produced by the individuals or the communities and organizations are used for growth and prosperity. The technological advances are used to create institutions that endorse social values, justice, equality, liberty, human dignity, brotherhood, fraternity, cultural diversity, plurality, good governance without discrimination on basis of gender, race, religion or caste etc.

## Life Purpose of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Throughout the history, many holy men, emperors, kings, philosophers etc. have manifested pearls of wisdom and knowledge in words and deeds shaping the epoch they lived. In this vein, the principles of life pronounced by Guru Nanak Dev are a rich source of knowledge and wisdom



that enables one to experience and depth of knowledge through the mystic consciousness of oneself by dispelling ignorance, malice, hatred and irrationality.

For the life purpose of Guru Ji, Bhai Gurdas says, *Satguru Nanak pragatia miti dhundhu jag (i) chanan(u) hoa* (Bhai Gurdas, Pauri 27.1). The Guru took Avtar in the mortal world to **illumine it with celestial knowledge** and teach people to tread on the righteous path. The entire life of Guru Nanak Dev is an embodiment of knowledge collection and dissemination. The infinite thirst for knowledge was the purpose of long travels or *Udasis* to bring out people from the veil of ignorance and inculcate scientific and humanistic ideas in them. The basic premise that the Guru emphasized was love in the mankind and harmony amongst all the living beings to create an all-embracing society based on the True knowledge and an individuals' life centred on values.

### **Essence of Knowledge Society in Guru Nanak Dev's Philosophy**

An enlightened society based on enlightened individuals with an open mind was crafted by the Guru. The Divine Light has to be within oneself that will guide one throughout life and lead to the path to liberation. The praxis of a person is firmly rooted in the acquired human knowledge and a knowledgeable person is one who imbibes values in one's life.

Guru Nanak taught that one has to open the doors and windows of the minds so that knowledge accumulation could be from all quarters. Education trains one to employ his 'critical faculty as the anvil and the accumulated wisdom of mankind as the fashioning tool'

ਅਹਰਣਿ ਮਤਿ ਵੇਦੁ ਹਥੀਆਰੁ ॥

Ahran (i) mat(i)ved(u) hathiar

[SGGS:8]

The intuitive consciousness, intellect and understanding of the mind are shaped through the Guru's Shabad.

ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੈ ਜਨਮੁ ਕਿ ਲੇਖਹਿ ॥ [SGGS: 16]

*Vin gur sabdai janam ke lekheh.*

Without the Word of the Guru's Shabad, what use is human life?

Remembering Divine constantly would redeem a person. The Guru stated that meditating on God's Name dispels ignorance and illuminates the world.

ਬੋਲਹੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਸਤਾਰਾ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਰਤਨੁ ਹਰਿ ਲਾਭੈ ਮਿਟੈ ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਉਜੀਆਰਾ ॥੧॥

[SGGS: 353]

*Bolhu Ram Kare Nistara. Gur Parsad Ratan Har Labhai Mitai Agian Hoe Ujiara.*

So speak the Lord's Name, which shall emancipate you.

By Guru's Grace, the jewel of the Lord is found; ignorance is dispelled, and the Divine Light shines forth.

The various facets of knowledge are beautifully depicted in Guru Nanak Bani.

### **Brahm Giani**

By following the light within and treading on the path illuminated so, would make a person complete and achieve *Brahm Gian*. When the lamp of learning is lit, darkness of self-centredness is dispelled stimulating one to love mankind. This is the way of salvation of the individual and emancipation of the community.

Brahm Giani is an enlightened individual who has attained spiritual bliss with blessing of *Waheguru*.

He is an embodiment of infinite values like, compassion, righteousness, piety, purity and is unaffected by all entanglements and vices of life. The definition and yardsticks of Brahm Giani have been elaborated by the Guru. The pertinent question of the real meaning of a knowledgeable person or Giani is discoursed in the following slok:

ਸੁਣਿ ਸੁਣਿ ਗੰਢਣੁ ਗੰਢੀਐ ਲਿਖਿ ਪੜਿ ਬੁਝਹਿ ਭਾਰੁ ॥  
 ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਅਗਲੀ ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥  
 ਓਹੁ ਵੇਪਰਵਾਹੁ ਅਤੋਲਵਾ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

[SGGS: 20]

*Sun sun gandhan gandhiyai likh par bujheh bhar.  
 Tarisna ahinis agli haumai rog vikar.*

Oh veparvahu atolva gurmat kimat sar.

Again and again, we hear and tell stories; we read and write and understand loads of knowledge.

But still, desires increases day and night and the diseases of egotism fills us with corruption.

That Carefree Lord cannot be appraised; His Real Value is known only through the Wisdom of the Guru's Teachings.

ਪ੍ਰਣਵਤਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕੈਸਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ [SGGS: 25]

*Paranvat Nanak giani kaisa hoe.*

Prays Nanak, what is the nature of the spiritual people?

And Guru Nanak's precious pearls of wisdom explain that spiritual people who contemplate God attain self-realization and understand the true essence of God. Answering the question that who is a wise person, Guru Nanak says:



ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣੈ ਬੂਝੈ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਗੁਰ ਪਰਸਾਦਿ ਕਰੇ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

ਸੋ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥ [SGGS:25]

*Aap pachhanai bujhai soe. Gur parsad kare bichar.  
So giani dargeh parvan.*

They are self-realized; they understand God. Guru's Grace; they contemplate Him; Such spiritual people are honoured in His Court.

One cannot become wise by merely reading a few books and transmitting the knowledge contained in it to others. A truly knowledgeable person is one who imbibes values in one's life.

ਪੰਡਿਤ ਵਾਚਹਿ ਪੋਥੀਆ ਨਾ ਬੂਝਹਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

*Pandit vachen pothia na bujheh vichar.*

The Pandits, the religious scholars, read their books, but they do not understand the real meaning.

ਕੇਤੇ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਜੋਤਕੀ ਬੇਦਾ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 56]

*Kete pandit jotki beda karahi bichar.*

There are so many Pandits and astrologers who ponder over the Vedas.

**Knowledge Acquisition is through self-discipline based on Values**

With all entanglements and engrossments in *Maya* and in the pursuits of life, one cannot reach the stage of learning or wisdom. Learning without detachment would not fetch true knowledge for imbibing values in life is of utmost importance.

ਪੰਡਿਤੁ ਪੜਿ ਨ ਪਹੁਚਈ ਬਹੁ ਆਲ ਜੰਜਾਲਾ ॥ [SGGS:1012]



*Pandit par napahuchai baho al janjala.*

The Pandit, the religious scholar, reads, but does not reach the Lord; he is totally entangled in worldly affairs.

A rigorous regime of self-discipline and repeating the True Name true knowledge is attained.

ਜਾਲਿ ਮੋਹੁ ਘਸਿ ਮਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਤਿ ਕਾਗਦੁ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਰੁ ॥  
ਭਾਉ ਕਲਮ ਕਰਿ ਚਿਤੁ ਲੇਖਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਪੁਛਿ ਲਿਖੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥  
ਲਿਖੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਲਿਖੁ ਲਿਖੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥੧॥  
ਬਾਬਾ ਏਹੁ ਲੇਖਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਜਾਣੁ ॥  
ਜਿਥੈ ਲੇਖਾ ਮੰਗੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਹੋਇ ਸਚਾ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥੧॥

[SGGS: 16]

*Jal moh ghas mas kar mat kagad kar sar. Bhao kalam kar chit lekhari gur puchh likh bichar. Likh nam salah likh likh ant naparavar.*

*Baba ehu lekha likh jan. Jithai lekha mangiai tithai hoe sachha nisan.*

Burn emotional attachment, and grind it into ink. Transform your intelligence into the purest of paper. :

Make the love of the Lord your pen, and let your consciousness be the scribe. Then, seek the Guru's Instructions, and record these deliberations.

Write the Praises of the Nam, the Name of the Lord; write over and over again that He has no end or limitation.

O Baba, write such an account, that when it is asked for, it will bring the Mark of Truth.

Without shedding all impurities and evils and treasuring values, true knowledge cannot be attained. The

practice of the inner consciousness through Santokh, Sewa and Grubani one reaches a new realm of enlightenment. ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਮਤਿ ਮਨਿ ਬੁਧਿ ॥ ਤਿਥੈ ਘੜੀਐ ਸੁਰਾ ਸਿਧਾ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ॥ *'Tithai ghariai surat mat man budh. Tithai ghariai sura sidha ki sudh'*.

The quest of virtues is akin to all sorts of weapons and means that help a person to win in life for which the blessing of God is essential.

ਤਰਕਸ ਤੀਰ ਕਮਾਣ ਸਾਂਗ ਤੇਗਬੰਦ ਗੁਣ ਧਾਤੁ ॥  
ਵਾਜਾ ਨੇਜਾ ਪਤਿ ਸਿਉ ਪਰਗਟੁ ਕਰਮੁ ਤੇਰਾ ਮੇਰੀ ਜਾਤਿ ॥

[SGGS: 16]

*Tarkas tir Kaman sang tegband gun dhat. Vaja neja pat sio pargat karam tera meri jat.*

The pursuit of virtue is my bow and arrow, my neja pat sio pargat karam tera meri jat.

The pursuit of virtue is my bow and arrow, my quiver, sword and scabbard.

To be distinguished with honour is my drum and banner. Your Mercy is my social status.

### Realization of an Individual

Salvation of an individual is possible by living ethically in this world. "The world was established as the home for righteousness actions in the midst of nights, seasons, weeks, days, air, water, fire and netherworld".

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ॥  
ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ॥ [SGGS:7]

*Rati ruti thiti var. Pavan Pani agni patal. Tis vich dharti thap rakhi dharam sal.*

Nights, days, weeks and seasons; wind, water, fire

and the nether regions—in the midst of these, He established the earth as a home for Dharma.

The realization of an individual is possible if one introspects and realizes oneself.

ਆਪੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੇ ਸੁ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਹੋਈ ॥ [SGGS: 152]

*Aap bichare so giani hoi.*

One who contemplates his own self is truly wise.

Guru Nanak Dev envisioned a process of Khands in Japji Sahib for the acquisition of wisdom or knowledge that is of prime importance in the ethical and spiritual progress of man. In Japji Sahib, an individual can gradually ascend through five spiritual realms or Panj Khands [SGGS: 7-8] namely, Dharam Khand, Gian Khand, Saram Khand, Karam Khand and Sach Khand to attain self-realization and emancipation.

The field of renunciation his faithful practice of *Naam Simran* and *Sach Khand*, the field of Divine Truth is the Realm of Truth where Divine Order (*Hukam*) or the Formless One pervades.

Guru Nanak distinguished Gurmukh who is inclined towards the God and a Manmukh who has detached himself from God. Guru Nanak says that *manmukh* are separated from God, wander aimlessly and have to bear sufferings:

ਮਨਮੁਖਿ ਸੋਝੀ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਵੀਛੁੜਿ ਚੋਟਾ ਖਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 60]

*Manmukh sojhi na pavai vichhur chota khae.*

The self-willed manmukhs do not understand; separated from Him, they endure beatings.

The stage when a person moves from being Manmukhs to Gurmukh is the final goal for emancipation of a person.



ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਬਖਸੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਭੰਡਾਰ ॥

[SGGS: 60]

*Gurmukh antar rav rahia bakhse bhagat bhandar.*

For Gurmukh, the society of the saints is like a pilgrimage to a sacred shrine.

ਤੀਰਥਿ ਨਾਵਣ ਜਾਉ ਤੀਰਥੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਹੈ॥

ਤੀਰਥੁ ਸਬਦ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਹੈ ॥ [SGGS: 687]

*Tirath navan jao, tirath Naam hai. Tirath Sabadh Beechaar Anthar Gian Hai.*

My sacred shrine of pilgrimage is spiritual wisdom within, and contemplation on the Word of the Shabad.

Why should I bathe at sacred shrines of pilgrimage? The Naam, the Name of the Lord, is the sacred shrine of pilgrimage.

### Path to Enlightenment

The Supreme Being is manifested in manifold shapes, forms and things and is sporting in its effervescences. Love of God is to be imbibed in one's mind to reach to enlightenment.

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਗਦ ਲਖ ਮਣਾ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਮਸੂ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਲੇਖਣਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਚਲਾਉ ॥

[SGGS:15]

*Nanak kagad lakh mana par par kichai bhao. Masu tot na avi lekhan paun chalo.*

O Nanak, if I had hundreds of thousands of stacks of paper, and if I were to read and recite and embrace love for the Lord, and if ink were never to fail me, and if my pen were able to move like the wind.

The true essence of life is remaining poised and



keeping away from all allurements in life. This will enable one to reach to sagacity and erudition.

The supreme spiritual wisdom can be attained when one is poised and away from all allurements in life that will satiate all yearnings of a person.

ਮਨੁ ਬੈਰਾਗੀ ਘਰਿ ਵਸੈ ਸਚ ਭੈ ਰਾਤਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਗਿਆਨ ਮਹਾ ਰਸੁ ਭੋਗਵੈ ਬਾਹੁੜਿ ਭੂਖ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

[SGGS: 21]

*Man bairagi ghar vasai sach bhai rata hoe. Gian maha ras bhogvai bahur bhukh na hoe.*

If the mind becomes balanced and detached, and comes to dwell in its own true home, imbued with the Fear of God,

Then it enjoys the essence of supreme spiritual wisdom; it shall never feel hunger again.

On the contrary, an unwise person is entangled in all cobwebs of life leading to insatiable desires and yearnings.

ਏਹੁ ਮਨੋ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਲੋਭੀਆ ਲੋਭੇ ਲਗਾ ਲੁਭਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 21]

*Ehu mano murakh lobhia lobhe laga lobhan.*

This foolish mind is greedy; through greed, it becomes even more attached to greed.

The Treasure of Excellence in otherworldly affairs is attained through Shabad. Guru Nanak Dev, to realize God in one's life and during one's lifetime, sanction path of Truth.

ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ ॥ ਹੈ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੋਸੀ ਭੀ ਸਚੁ ॥੧॥

Aad sach jugaad sach, hai bhee sach Nanak hosee bhi sach-

(SGGS:1)

ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਭੀਜੈ ਸਾਕਤਾ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਆਵਨੁ ਜਾਨੁ ॥

ਸਾਧੁ ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਜੇ ਮਿਲੈ ਤਾ ਪਾਈਐ ਗੁਣੀ ਨਿਧਾਨੁ ॥

[SGGS: 21]

*Sabad na bhijai sakta durmat avan jan. Sadhu  
satgur je milai ta paial guni nidhan.*

The evil-minded shaaktas, the faithless cynics, are not attuned to the Shabad; they come and go in reincarnation.

One who meets with the Holy True Guru finds the Treasure of Excellence.

The transcendental God resides in all persons and the entire creation and everything around us is manifestation of the Ultimate. When the inner space of the mind and heart is filled with light, pure effulgence emerges with this illumination and glorification of the minds. At this stage man merges with God.

So, the realization in this life and attainment of Ultimate Reality is through quintessence of True Knowledge. Guru Nanak spread light in the age of darkness and ignorance and preached even an iota of merit or erudition in this life is not possible without understanding One God.

*(The Sikh Review, February 2020)*

# Three Pillars of a Fulfilled Life

*Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal*

Many research studies on the meaning fullness in life and the purpose of living reveal that most citizens are seeking fulfillment as their most cherished intention. Several recent surveys conclude that, more and more, North Americans tend to live lives driven by the goals they most revere. They continue to be physically active and otherwise engaged in human endeavors, both physical and emotional in achieving their goals they consciously or unconsciously set.

This essential purpose of fulfillment is becoming the primary preoccupation of every conscientious person. Therefore, we must construct the characteristics of those objectives to determine if they will enable our communities to have purpose lives.

To help the ordinary citizen in achieving the life goals, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) evolved three categories of core values to live by. These core values were the central theme during his wide-ranging missionary endeavors. He claimed those to descend from divine inspirations. Both he and his nine successors, as well as, the prominent Sikh theologians, set the same specific doctrines and detailed the associated teachings as the kinds of living endeavors that would constitute the three categories and create a fulfilling human life. As a result, most institutions set up by the Sikh citizenries evolve from those three doctrines.

In his teachings, Guru Nanak designated three core doctrines that, when blended, would transform life into something most meaningful. In doctrinal terms,



Guru Nanak named them as NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN. Translated into today's idiom, they are:

**NAAM** - Mindful Awareness of Divine Presence.

**DAAN** - Live Out the Culture of Altruism while Seeking Divine Benevolence.

**ISNAAN** - Practice Ethics of Good Deeds that Cleanse both Body and Mind.

Humanity today, on Guru Nanak's 550th birth anniversary is challenged to explore as to what do these doctrines mean for the modern civil societies of today. They are amply detailed in Sikh scriptures. In this essay, I will review the scriptural authority, the historical evidence in support of whether NAAM- DAAN- ISNAAN was indeed the terminology the Gurus selected to communicate their primary teachings and the brief descriptions of what these doctrinal terms meant in terms of belief and human lifestyles or behaviors.

## ORIGIN AND GROUNDWORK

The principles of the Sikh Rehat, which are guidelines for daily practice, first originated in Guru Nanak's teachings. The Guru spread the divine message to all those coming to him and thus laid the groundwork for a universal Code of Conduct. This code was meant to be timeless and meant for everyone without any prejudice of race, religion, gender or nationality. It is a comprehensive guide to living purposefully in every civil society.

As the tradition goes, the original code of values was summed up by the Guru himself in three theological terms, NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਦਿਸਨਾਨੁ). In every opportunity to transmit his ministry, the Guru emphasized



a lifestyle based upon the precepts embedded in these three words.

For example, this was the first pronouncement of Nanak's ministry after his enlightening meditation along the banks of the rivulet vein nadi, at the age of 27.

The enlightening meditation around vein nadi is considered the most significant event in the life of the founder of the Sikh religion. Historians describe this event as the occasion immediately after which Guru Nanak undertook his worldwide ministry. It is then that he spoke to the public and pronounced that he was inspired by the Creator with messages for all humanity.

Referring to this message, the writers of the oldest available Sikh history, ancient *Meharban Vaalee Janam Sakhi*, described the Divine instructions to the Guru as saying,

O' Nanak, those you accept, will be given salvation in the court of the Divine, ... you are ordained to undertake the mission of both articulating and inculcating the practice of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN in the millennium of the coming ages (Singh, 1994).

In recorded Sikh history, it is from this event and time that the NAAM DAAN ISNAAN terms were rightfully regarded as representing the core doctrines of Sikhism. The same doctrines were routinely advocated in the Sikh congregations, and a lot has been written about their meanings and implications in life.

Following Nanak's event of vein nadi, the sacred terms, NAAM DAAN ISNAAN were made a part of the Gurmat philosophy, and Sikh values. Thereafter, the Gurus

and other Sikh theologians, as well as Sikh exegeses, actively popularized these terms and the teachings embedded in them. Until recently, they did not permit any substitution of these Divine inspired doctrinally terms.

From this time onward, these terms and the concepts they represented would continue to be recognized as the fundamentals of Sikhism. They were variously translated and explained with the changing times according to the needs of the local languages and customs. This is not unusual. With the changing sociopolitical milieu, with the cultural as well as the etymological needs, it is expected that, with time, more contemporary meanings would be employed to express the essence of the original diction and basic concepts contained in Nanak's three canons.

The evolution of terminology is expected with time; however, great caution must be exercised to preserve the original terms and their meanings as they embody the canons and the doctrines. When newer terms are introduced, they may subtly begin to taint the original significance of the canons to accommodate the expression of many cultural and geographical needs. Once accepted, the subtle changes tend to introduce distortions of the original meaning.

To guard against any long-lasting variation in the essence of the terms, it must be emphasized periodically that the basic principles must be referred to by the original doctrinal terms coined by the founders themselves; or by those subsequently authenticated by the Gurus themselves; or done so by their contemporary theologians.

## SCRIPTURAL SANCTITY OF NAAM DAAN ISNAAN

Sikhs consider the verses contained in the volume of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) as the Eternal Guru whose wisdom must not be contested. It is these verses that provide indisputable support for the terms that Guru Nanak had chosen. They are then promoted by the Guru's contemporary theologians and exegetists. Let us examine those documents.

### THE GURU'S OWN SERMONS

Above all the other supporting evidence, the Gurus themselves emphasized the rehat of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN. For instance, the Guru wrote down the terms in their own verses as,

ਸੁਣਿ ਗਲਾ ਗੁਰ ਪਹਿ ਆਇਆ ॥ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦਿੜਾਇਆ ॥

ਸਭੁ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਸੈਸਾਰੜਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੀ ਬੇੜੀ ਚਾੜਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

[SGGS: 74]

*I heard of the Guru's repute, and so I went to the Guru. The Guru instilled within me the teaching of Naam, Daan, Isnaan. Said Nanak, this was the path through which whole humanity may be liberated as the way of Naam, Daan, Isnaan puts the seeker on the boat of eternal truths.*

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥

[SGGS: 942]

The Guru-Oriented seekers receive the wisdom of" NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN (ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ) to attune to the blissful state.

ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਸੁ ਜਾਗੇ ॥

(SGGS: 419)

*The devout are awakened to the Worship of the Divine with firm faith in the lifestyle of "NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN"*

ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਸੁਚਾਰੀ ॥ [SGGS: 740]

*Instill in your life, NAAM, DAAN, AND ISNAAN as the acts of piousness.*

When the Guru found an occasion to deliver his sermon, he used those opportunities to stress his mission. He emphasized the principles of his new religion irrespective of the faith of the audience. For example, on two premier holy festivals of Hindus, both Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan preached as follows.

ਦਸਮੀ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 840]

*On the day of Dasami observance, dedicate yourself to the life of NAAM DAAN AND ISNAAN.*

ਦੁਆਦਸੀ ਦਾਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥ [SGGS: 299]

*On the day of Duadsi observance, commit yourself to the practice of NAAM, DAAN, AND ISNAAN.*

The Guru instructed the Sikh theologians to use NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN as subjects for their exegeses.

ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦਿੜੁ ਸਦਾ ਕਰਹੁ ਗੁਰ ਕਥਾ ॥

[SGGS: 1101]

*Confirm your faith in the NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN, and always use these topics for exegeses.*

As far as we know, like other Gurus, Guru Gobind Singh continued the tradition of using the terms: "NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN." There are several references to them in the Guru's teachings.



It is thus clear that the terms employed to describe the three pillars of the Sikh way of life were never allowed to any alteration in over two centuries of the Gurus' lives. It is not wise, therefore, to permit any change now. This certainly does not preclude any restriction, however, on translating them into contemporary idioms when necessary, as long as the original terms are not disregarded.

## TESTIMONY OF BHAÏ GURDAS

Bhai Gurdas (1551- 1636) was Guru Arjun's scribe who compiled the first recension of the Guru Granth. Bhai Gurdas was the son of Datar Chand Bhalla, a first cousin of Guru Amar Das; his cousin's Sister, Bibi Bhani, was married to Guru Ram Das and was the mother of Guru Arjan. This made Bhai Gurdas the maternal uncle of Guru Arjan. Thus, Bhai Gurdas may be considered the Sikh best connected to the Gurus' family and the Guru's teachings. Also, he had a singular privilege of living through the time up to the sixth Guru and is considered the first missionary of Sikh philosophy and mysticism.

Bhai Gurdas wrote extensively on the Gurmat or Sikhi philosophy and the Sikh way of life. Guru Arjan designated Bhai Gurdas' writings as the key to the scripture written in Guru Granth Sahib. In this capacity, Bhai Gurdas was the first to outline Guru's own instructions on the theology and morality of the Sikh community in the Gurus' time and for the times to come.

Bhai Gurdas elected to include his testimony on the injunctions of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN- ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) in his very first Pauri or hymn. This pauri was composed as an homage to the founder of the religion, Guru Nanak, and

as an overview of his composition. It goes as follows:

ਭਾਉ ਭਗਤਿ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬਿ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ।

- Bhai Gurdas, Var 1, Pauri 1.

*I bow to Guru Nanak who transformed his follower's world into those who continually rededicate themselves to the Guru's principles through the celebration of the Guru's greatness and emphasize on others the Guru's path of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN.*

Similarly, when Bhai Gurdas narrated the foundation of the Panth, he included the injunctions of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN as its essential component.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪੰਥੁ ਚਲਾਇਓਨੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ।

- Bhai Gurdas, Var 23, Pauri 1.

*The Guru founded the path of Guru oriented by emphasizing NAAM DAAN ISNAAN*

Further, when Bhai Gurdas described the teachings that Guru asked his followers to abide by, it contained NAAM DAAN ISNAAN as a critical component.

ਪਰ ਤਨ ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦ ਮੇਟਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਆ ।

-Bhai Gurdas, Var 29, Pauri 2.

*You must extinguish any evil eye on other's body, on other's wealth or badmouthing of others, then adopt the path of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN*

Among the virtues that the Guru had emphasized included; to be truthful, content, merciful, religious and the practitioner of NAAM, DAAN, AND ISNAAN, as in the following verse.

ਸਤਿ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਦਇਆ ਧਰਮੁ ਅਰਥੁ ਸਮਰਥੁ ਸਭੇ ਬੰਧਾਨਾ ।

- Bhai Gurdas, Var 30, Pauri 15.

*For inculcating the Truth, fulfillment, mercy, and divinity, the Guru emphasized NAAM DAAN ISNAAN*

Bhai Gurdas considered the practice of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN as a fulfillment of the Guru's teachings. He wrote,

ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਕਮਾਵਣਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨਾ ।

- Bhai Gurdas, Var 30, Paui 15.

*To a Guru oriented individual, the practice of NAAMDAAN ISNAAN constitutes the fulfillment of Guru's teachings.*

### TESTIMONY OF BHAI NAND LAL

Bhai Nand Lal was the Poet Laureate of Guru's court and the most dearly loved disciple of Guru Gobind Singh, the last guru in human form. He wrote two *Rehatnamas*, one known as *Rehatnama* written in 1695, i.e., four years before the presently most celebrated Vaisakhi of 1699, and the other in 1699 known as *Tankhahnama*.

Guru Gobind Singh himself asked Nand Lal to compile Guru's injunctions for the guidance of the Sikh communities after the Guru left his human body for his heavenly abode. Both *Rehatnama* and *Tankhahnama* were believed to be written under the personal guidance of Guru Gobind Singh. These pieces were composed in the style of a conversation between the Guru and Bhai Nand Lal.

In these compositions, Guru Gobind Singh asked Bhai Nand Lal to convey to the Sikhs the following message for inclusion in their daily code of conduct.

ਨੰਦ ਲਾਲ ਤੁਮ ਸੁਣਹੁ ਸਿਖ ਕਰਮ ਹੈ ਏਹਿ ।

ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਕਰੇ ਨ ਅੰਨ ਸਿਉ ਨੇਹੁ ।

-Bhai Nand Lal, 1.17.



*Listen, O, my dear Bhai Nand Lal, the religious deeds of the Sikhs are defined as follows - but for NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN, a Sikh should not form an association with anything else.*

After perusing the testimonies above, there should be no question or doubt that NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN were the major doctrines and the doctrinal terms that form all of the Sikh teachings.

### **REPLACEMENT OF ORIGINAL TERMS: ORIGIN AND IMPLICATIONS**

A cursory view of current trends in Sikh publications, youth programs, and other ceremonies reveals that the essence of certain textual canons of Sikh principles may be gradually altering without any one's notice. The Gurus principles of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨ ਇਸਨਾਨ) are being substituted by virtually non-Gurbani terms to suit the convenience and circumstances. Whereas the motives of the writers and speakers may be genuine, there is a risk of tainting the fundamental canons of Sikhism with the passage of time.

Other terms which are becoming more popular in the Punjabi regions of the Indian sub-continent to describe the Guru's three precepts are Naam Japo, Vand Chhako, Kirat Karo, instead of NAAM, DAAN, ISNAAN. These are newer terms that Guru never spoke or wrote; they were coined during the post-Guru periods and only recently. The time of their exact origin is not known, but I have a hunch. They certainly came to exist only after the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947.

Very different terms erroneously considered



equivalent to represent the same ideas were mentioned by Bhai Mani Singh. But he used each of them separately and in separate contexts, never astroika of three words.

It is a common belief that Bhai Vir Singh allowed the use of these terms *Naam Japo*, *Vand Chhako*, *Dharma Di Kirat Karo* only to blunt Communist influence on the Sikh Youth, and never to replace the original doctrines. The motivation was to stress that Sikhism had already imbibed two major slogans of the Communist movement. And Sikhism goes beyond that, by emphasizing a belief in God to which Communism was opposed.

I distinctly recall this point being highlighted in the Sikh youth gatherings by the All India Sikh Students Federation, and other Sikh activist movements, myself being included and enthusiastically part of it. The idea was noble. It was to not permit heavily propagated communism to impact our youth. All the youth leaders supported the idea and heavily emphasized these points in our presentations.

Although the intention at that time was laudable, and it served its purpose well, the vast popularity of these new terms gradually began to erode the originals NAAM DAAN ISNAAN doctrines. The newer terms, Naam Japo, Vand Chhako, Kirat Karo that were only meant to halt communist inroads, over time began to corrupt the original intention.

Some authors even unwittingly started to go astray in their exposition while explaining the terms in the context of their own understanding. They would preach these words of Naam-japo, Vand-chhako, Dharam-di-kirat

karo as if they were the original injunctions of the Gurus. But certainly, that is not true. None of the ten gurus ever spoke those terms as a troika. However, the temporarily employed terms became to enter encyclopedias and other literature. That needs to be halted and discouraged whenever there is an opportunity to do so.

On conclusion of this introduction section, I must say that it was Guru Nanak who gave us the divinely inspired guidelines towards a most fulfilled life. All his successors and the exegetes of the time actively promoted the same, so we may live our life in the most fulfilled way. We may continue to follow the Guru for centuries afterward.

My concern here is the cursory view of the present trend in Sikh publications, youth programs, and other Sikh ceremonies. They reveal that the essence of certain textual canons of Sikh principles may be gradually losing the original intention of the Guru without any one's notice. The Guru's principles of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ) are being substituted by virtually non-Gurbani phrases to suit the convenience and circumstances. Whereas the motives of those who are popularizing the much- altered terms may be genuine, there is a risk of tainting the Gurmat doctrines this way with the passage of time.

In the remaining essay, I delve into our current understanding of the Gurus teachings as defined in his spiritually inspired doctrines of NAAM DAAN ISNAAN (ਨਾਮ ਦਾਨੁ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ). I will now deliberate the doctrines embedded in these terms that are meant for universal application in today's civil societies.

Let us now briefly define the doctrinal terminology that Guru advocated to live by.

### **Naam - A Password for Universal Reality**

Naam and Naam Simran are two of the most central concepts in *Sikhi*. The importance of *Naam* as a foundational concept can be gauged from the fact that it appears over 5,000 times in the *Guru Granth Sahib*, making it the most frequently occurring word in the Scripture. Thus, an exhaustive review is not possible here, especially when one considers that there have been volumes written about it, and it remains the centerpiece of Sikh exegesis.

Naam is the first of the three doctrinal terms, Naam, Daan, Isnaan, that formed the basis of Guru Nanak's teaching.

Naam literally means a name or an identity of a person, a thing or an entity. For this essay, I will follow the usual convention of treating Naam to mean the name or identity of the Creator or God or the Eternal Truth, not of any person or deity. Consider Naam as a generic term used to denote Ultimate Reality manifested in all creations.

#### **Naam is an expression of God**

Naam in *Sikhi-sm* is the identity of Ultimate Reality, or what Guru Nanak called *Ek-Onkaar*, which literally means "One ultimate but the virtual reality that is manifested in all creation." Guru Nanak designed a symbol for this entity:

Over the period, the symbol became the Sikh insignia: all Gurus used it as their signature. You will see it displayed in every religious place of the Sikhs as well as in the Sikh homes.



Ek-Onkaar has a comprehensive spiritual and divine connotation. It also means that every unit of the creation is the essence or part of the Universal Soul. Since the Divine cannot be touched through human senses or be related to directly, Guru Nanak asked that it may be related to its manifestations through the creations. He rightfully named it *Ek-Onkaar* and Guru Arjan started the Sikh scripture with this symbol.

Naam, like the Truth it signifies, has no physical shape and form. But the invisible is the experiential basis of all that is visible. The Guru wrote,

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲੇ ਜੰਤ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਖੰਡ ਬਹੁਮੰਡ ॥.....

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਆਗਾਸ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥ ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਸਗਲ ਆਕਾਰ ॥

ਨਾਮ ਕੇ ਧਾਰੇ ਪੁਰੀਆ ਸਭ ਭਵਨ ॥ [SGGS: 284]

*Naam is the identity of the One Who Is the Supports of the earth and solar systems.*

*Naam is the identity of the One Who Is the Supports of all creatures.*

*Naam is the identity of the One Who Is the Support of the Akashic ethers and the nether regions.*

*Naam is the identity of the One Who Is the Supports of all bodies.*

*Naam is the identity of the One Who Is the Supports of all worlds and realms.*

By focusing our mind on Naam through the divine's manifestation as Creation, that is all Life, we can connect with Naam and Ultimately, 1-Onkaar.

Guru Nanak taught us not to shun this world but to embrace it through the expression of Naam. This way, we



may connect to the Ultimate Really via our connections to every situation, type, and shape of the creation.

Let me cite one illustration of how Guru Nanak saw the same virtual reality in everything and every action.

ਆਪੇ ਰਸੀਆ ਆਪਿ ਰਸੁ ਆਪੇ ਰਾਵਣਹਾਰੁ ॥ ਆਪੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਚੋਲੜਾ ਆਪੇ  
ਸੇਜ ਭਤਾਰੁ॥੧॥ ਰੰਗਿ ਰਤਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਰਵਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ॥੧॥  
ਰਹਾਉ॥ ਆਪੇ ਮਾਛੀ ਮਛਲੀ ਆਪੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਜਾਲੁ॥ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਲ ਮਣਕੜਾ ਆਪੇ  
ਅੰਦਰਿ ਲਾਲੁ ॥੨॥ ਆਪੇ ਬਹੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਰੰਗੁਲਾ ਸਖੀਏ ਮੇਰਾ ਲਾਲੁ॥ ਨਿਤ  
ਰਵੈ ਸੋਹਾਗਣੀ ਦੇਖੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ਹਾਲੁ ॥੩॥ ਪ੍ਰਣਵੈ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਏਨਤੀ ਤੂ ਸਰਵਰੁ ਤੂ  
ਹੰਸੁ ॥ ਕਉਲੁ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਕਵੀਆ ਤੂ ਹੈ ਆਪੇ ਵੇਖਿ ਵਿਗਸੁ ॥ [SGGS: 23]

*You yourself are the Lover, You yourself are the  
Love, You are the preceptor of the enjoyment.*

*You are the bride, You are the Groom, You are the  
nuptial bed.*

*My Sahib is dyed in color-love, totally permeating  
everywhere. Pause here to Reflect.*

*You are the fisherman, You are the fish; You are the  
water, You are the net.*

*You are the weight in the net, You are the inside  
bait.*

*You love in many ways; O Maiden! This is my  
Beloved.*

*Continuously adoring bride-lovers, look at my  
plight too.*

*Hear my plea, prays Nanak: You are the pool, You  
are the swan,*

*You are the lotus, You are the water- lily; You  
behold all in blooming-joyousness.*

Similarly, Bhai Gurdas, the scribe of the Sikh scripture of the Guru Granth employed the metaphor of gold transiently molded into ornaments to describe the Divine manifestation in the creation. Likewise, God is a Single Entity, and all Rays emanating from Divinity carry the very Essence of God's attributes.

**Bhai Gurdas wrote:**

ਸੁਨਿਆਰਾ ਸੁਇਨਾ ਘੜੈ ਗਹਣੈ ਸਾਵਾਰੇ ।  
 ਪਿਪਲ ਵਤਰੇ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਤਾਨਉੜੇ ਤਾਰੇ ।  
 ਵੇਸਰ ਨਥਿ ਵਖਾਣੀਐ ਕੰਠ ਮਾਲਾ ਧਾਰੇ ।  
 ਟੀਕਤਿ ਮਣੀਆ ਮੋਤਿਸਰ ਗਜਰੇ ਪਾਸਾਰੇ ।  
 ਦੁਰਾ ਬੁਹੱਟਾ ਗੋਲ ਛਾਪ ਕਰਿ ਬਹੁ ਪਰਕਾਰੇ ।  
 ਆਪੇ ਆਪਿ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ ।

*The goldsmith creates variety of beautiful ornaments out of the same gold.*

*Among them, many are like pipal leaf for the adornment of ears, and many are made of gold chains.*

*From gold, nose-rings and necklaces are also worked into their shape.*

*Ornament for the forehead (tikka), jewels studded necklace, pearl garlands are made.*

*Variegated wrist chains and round rings are prepared from gold.*

*The Guru oriented comprehends that like gold in the ornaments, the Creator is the fundamental of each and everything.*

Through the verses in the Guru Granth, the eternal wisdom instructs us in many ways on how to connect

with Naam. They are referred to as Naam Simran, Naam Japna, Naam Vicar, Naam Dhyana. We will discuss them separately in another essay.

For now, one way of to describe and practice Naam is to comprehend and continually rehearse a relationship with *Ek-Onkaar* in the silence of your mind and actions. This will enable the process of gradually expanding your consciousness to cosmic consciousness. Then, your human existence will begin to advance towards the Reality-centeredness, and away from the Self-centeredness. Our narcissism will start to vanish in order to give way to universal wisdom. The Guru gave this witness:

ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੋ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਦ੍ਰਿੜਾਇਦਾ ਕਟੇ ਹਉਮੈ ਰੋਗੁ ॥ [SGGS: 957]

*Guru implants the Mantra of the Naam, the Divine Identity, in every heart to eradicate the illness of egoism.*

As a result, the practice of Naam should bring a metamorphosis in our thinking and in our actions, through what Sir John Templeton used to call the universal love as well as the love of universe or creation.

Inculcation of universal love offers the possibility of transforming our focus from the material wealth to one of elevating the imposition of spiritual roots that enrich humanity by giving spiritual meaning to human lives.

Thus, Naam possesses a real opportunity to bring a critical transformation to human thinking and human life. At least, the practice of Naam will eliminate negative thinking. And, there are numerous benefits of getting rid of negative thinking.

### **Daan- Altruism**

Daan is the second of the three doctrinal terms,



*Naam, Daan, Isnaan*, that formed the basis of Guru Nanak's teaching. As stated earlier, an exhaustive treatment of *Daan* is not possible here, especially when one considers that there have been volumes written about it. I, myself, wrote many articles on the subject.

A simple translation of *Daan* in English is altruism; in Punjabi vernacular, *Daan* is *perupkaar*.

*Daan* is defined behaviorally as acting out of concern for the well-being of others, without regard to the practitioner's own self-interest. Biological altruism refers to behaviors that help the survival of a species without benefiting the particular individual, who's being altruistic, a sort of hard-wired compassion.

In my religious tradition, Sikhism, *Daan* is both a type of meditation and societal engagement that exceeds the average levels of social cooperation. We give *Daan* to the needy, but we also supplicate for *Daan* of benevolence, right wisdom, *Naam*, and other God's gifts to bridge over our own shortcomings. We praise God for the attributes of Mercy and Grace.

ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਸਰਬ ਸਧਾਰੀ ਸਫਲ ਦਰਸਨ ਸਹਜਇਆ ॥

(SGGS: 533]

*The Divine is an altruist, generous and benevolent, the beautifier of all, the embodiment of peace; the Blessed Vision (philosophy) of His is so rewarding!*

### **Tangible Benefits**

Modern research tells us that when we give without expectations of reciprocity, we experience the deep feeling of energy and fulfillment leading to quality happiness.



Asking for charity (*Daan*) of *Naam*, one derives all benefits of real meditation, and also ensures the health of mind and body.

Sikh theologian Bhai Gurdas describes the innate urge to do good as a deep and genuine fulfillment that is obtained only through altruism.

ਤਪਦਾ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਨੋ ਠੰਢੇ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰ ਵਿਹਾਣੀ।

ਅਗਨਿ ਬੁਝਾਏ ਤਪਤਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਠੰਢਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਬਿਲਮੁ ਨ ਆਣੀ ।

-Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 28, Pauri 13

*A Sikh gets fired up with an urge to engage in altruism that is chilled down by indulging in the altruistic actions. The altruistic activity extinguishes the fire in the hearts of life to cool it down without any delay.*

Bhai Gurdas went as far as saying that the trait of altruism is the most satisfying occupation; this is a conclusion one would reach after acquiring education in all specialties.

ਚਉਦਹ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਸੋਧਿ ਕੈ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੁ ਅਚਾਰੁ ਸੁਖਾਣਾ ।

- Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 25, Pauri 9

*While offering his altruist help Bhagat Puran Singh is remembered as saying to the physically compromised, "Sorry for helping you, but it's a trait I picked up from my ancestors thousands of years ago, and I just can't seem to get rid of it."*

With such a belief, Bhagat Ji could not accommodate narcissism even if he wanted to. As is well known, Bhagat ji was heroically altruistic. He displayed courage and generosity often in the face of unending barriers.

We live in a world with much need for help and

moral rearmament. We also live in a mean-spirited tit for tat world (just watch any cable news reports) always feeding on narcissism. Only a culture of altruism as designed by holy spirits can save humanity. Further, altruistic behaviors effectively attract others to join in improving the world culture. The scripture says,

ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਸੁਫਲ ਫਲਿ ਵਟ ਵਗਾਇ ਸਿਰਠਿ ਵਰੁਸਾਣੀ ।

ਚੰਦਨ ਵਾਸੁ ਵਣਾਸਪਤਿ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਵਾਸੁ ਮਹਿਕਾਣੀ ।

-Bhai Gurdas, Vaar 12, Pauri 13

An altruist is a winning trait that distinctly nourishes the whole of humanity. This individual and his/her selfless societal contributions are like sandalwood that lives among the bamboo vegetation that is always at the edge of striking at others to cause fatal fires, but altruist is there to always impart fragrance to the entire forest.

### **Isnaan - The Ethics of Good Deeds**

Isnaan in Sikhism is the third of the three pillars of a fulfilled life, *Naam*, *Daan*, and *Isnaan*. *Isnaan* literally means cleansing practices. It encompasses all those deeds, learnings, processes, or religiosities that are potent in cleansing. The object of cleansing is the mind, body, and their environments, in that order.

The cleansing deeds may be physical, cognitive or intellectual. The priority is to cleanse the inner faculties; mind, intellect, consciousness alike. Then comes the body to be washed from inside and out. Body cleansing alone has no impact on inner cleansing.

### **Age-Old Filth is carried as Memes**

Numerous undesirable impressions, ideations, and

habits spread from person to person within and across cultures. In modern science, these are called memes. A meme is an idea, behavior, or style that acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, media or other imitable phenomena.

Memes form clusters in the human brain. A collection of all these clusters together is described in the Sikhi phraseology as *MANN*.

Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogs to genes in that they self-replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures. Once they are formed, they are hard to get rid of. Therefore, the practices of Isnaan is emphasized.

ਜਨਮ ਜਨਮ ਕੀ ਇਸੁ ਮਨ ਕਉ ਮਲੁ ਲਾਗੀ ਕਾਲਾ ਹੋਆ ਸਿਆਹੁ ॥

[SGGS: 651]

The human cognition and mind, that is Mann, are blackened with the dust of cultural memes and the narcissist memes accumulated over many cycles of cultural births and deaths.

Further, once *MANN* is smudged everything else around us is also smudged, and they maintain continuous reinfections that are hard to cleanse. The wise men noted that this was an enigma only a few realize. The eternal Wisdom of Guru describes as:

ਮਨਿ ਮੈਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਮੈਲਾ ਤਨਿ ਧੋਤੈ ਮਨੁ ਹਛਾ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਇਹ ਜਗਤੁ ਭਰਮਿ ਭੁਲਾਇਆ ਵਿਰਲਾ ਬੂਝੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

[SGGS: 558]



*If the Mann or mind is soiled, all is soiled: by bathing the body, the mind is cleansed not. This world is led astray by Misgiving, and rare is the one who knows the Reality.*

This is a vital point: people try to infect each other with those memes which they find most appealing, regardless of the memes' objective value or truth. In the field of religion, the clerics class is one example of professionals who continually infect people's mind with ever-increasing religiosity.

The immediate impact may not be visible. But, like the carrier of the cliff-jumping meme might never actually take the plunge; they may spend the rest of their long lives infecting other people with the meme, inducing millions of gullible fools to leap to their deaths. Historically, this sort of thing is happening all the time.

### **The Deed of Isnaan**

At the practical level, Guru Nanak described Isnaan as:

ਨਾਉ ਨੀਰੁ ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਸਤੁ ਪਰਮਲੁ ਤਨਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥

[SGGS:16]

*Let your body and mind take a cleansing bath with the waters of Goodness to be followed by application of the scented oil of the Truthfulness that produces irresistible fragrance transmitting only welcome memes.*

ਗੁਰੁ ਦਰੀਆਉ ਸਦਾ ਜਲੁ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਮੈਲੁ ਹਰੈ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਪਾਇਐ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਪਸੁ ਪਰੇਤਹੁ ਦੇਵ ਕਰੈ ॥

[SGGS: 1329]

*The Divine Wisdom is the perennial spring of*

pure water of Life Force which is competent to remove impurities and paralysis of the human soul, and the Guru, therefore, is the only fulfillment and refuge for any person for one to transcend oneself from humanity to divinity.

While stressing on the treatment by Isnaan, the Eternal Wisdom, Guru, also advised us to take the preventive measures so that we avoid the infection of the mind.

ਸੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਿਤੁ ਮੈਲੁ ਨ ਲਾਗੈ ॥ ਹਰਿ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਮਹਿ ਏਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਜਾਗੈ ॥  
[SGGS: 199]

*Through your body and mind, practice only those deeds that do not permit soiling of the body and mind. Your mind must remain continuously alert and connected to the life-giving awareness of the Creator manifested in the whole creation and its environment.*

In conclusion, this metaphor of a bath as Isnaan is meant to elucidate a major lesson on Sikh values and behaviors.

The memes of cultural practices made up of Narcissism, and other selfish genes have been polluting the human Consciousness for ages. These memes are viruses that have been multiplying in the human mind and *MANN* throughout the cultural history of humankind. Their viral spread is badly needed to be disinfected. The crust formed from that infection requires scrubbing off by the deeds of Isnaan. There is no other way.

While practices of Isnaan will cleanse the mind, the practice *Naam* and *Daan* will prevent those viruses from re-infecting the human spirit. It will ensure the everlasting health of the human mind and the resulting

universal consciousness. As Guru stressed, this cannot be accomplished by washing the body even in the waters at the places of pilgrimages.

In Sikhism, cleansing of both body and mind are stressed. It is a total negation of toxic environment as well as evil thoughts. It is the opening of your heart, your mind, your life and your relationships to a process of detoxification. That process is described as Isnaan.

Such teaching is religious and found in older scriptures. As Jesus is known to say, Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Isaiah 1:16.

Note: This author has written a more comprehensive article of Isnaan published in the J. Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, vol. 32:1, Pages 31- 41,2013.

*(The Sikh Review, February, 2020)*



# Guru Nanak's Kartarpur

Bhupinder Singh, Houston

The place "Kartarpur" as we know is associated with Guru Nanak Dev Ji, where he settled in December 1521 and spent his last 18 years. His family from Talwandi (now Nankana Sahib) had joined him there in 1522, followed by his parents. Besides, many followers of Guru Ji whom he met during his various preaching journeys came here to visit Guru Ji, and decided to settle there. When we visited Kartarpur on 21st March 2019, we experienced that urge to settle here. Its magical attraction is undimmed by time, in spite of it almost being in a state of abandonment, as a result of the partition in 1947 and subsequent migration of Sikhs from there. Even today its calm surroundings, lush green fields, and fresh air have the ambience of Guru Ji's touch, which we experienced. The langar, food cooked from the crops there and with water from Guru Ji's own well made the most nurturing and satisfying meal. The lentils, vegetables and the tandoori roti served are from the fields still in name of Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Bhai Gurdas Ji had captured that history in these words:

“ਫਿਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਆਇਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰਿ ਭੇਖੁ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਸਗਲ ਉਤਾਰਾ ।

ਪਹਿਰਿ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਕਪੜੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਬੈਠਿ ਕੀਆ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ ।”

(ਅੰਗ ੩੮)

“Phir babaa aaiaa Kartarpur, bhekh udaasee sagal utaaraa. Pehar sansaaree kaprhay, manjee baith keeaa avataaraa.”

**Translation:** Then Baba (Nanak) returned to Kartarpur from Udassis (long preaching travels) where he put aside his attire of a Recluse. Now putting on a householder's dress, he spread his message from a seat to salvage the misguided people.

After the fourth Udassi, when Guru Ji came to settle in Kartarpur, as the township was in existence, let us explore how and when it was established. Upon returning from his first travel Guru Ji had made up his mind to set up a centre, where his teachings would be preached and practiced daily. So, Guru Ji came to Kalanaur Pargana along the river Ravi in January 1516, and spent few days here. Guru Ji liked the place and shared it with Bhai Ajita Randhawa. Bhai Ajita was very excited and made a lot of financial contributions towards the purchase of land. This was the place where the first temporary shed was set up by Doda, a farmer so that Guru Ji would have roof over his head during summer months and rainy season. The land was owned by Bhai Karoria who was opposed initially, but later even he donated the land and also helped in establishing the building. When Bhai Karoria offered land Guru told him that he believed all the land belonged to "Kartar" or Creator Lord. He named the place "Kartarpur", the place where Creator dwells. Guru Ji started second journey from Kartarpur. The word "Kartar" was very frequently used by Guru Ji when he met greeted and blessed visitors as:

1. Greetings "*Sat Kartar*"

- Translation: Creator is Truth.

2. Blessings "*Tainoo Kartar Chit Aaway.*"

- Translation: May You Remember Creator.

Even today when we utter that word "Kartarpur" we are reminded of the founder's special intimacy and liking for this word. Creator is the one who creates; has creative instincts with a creative touch; creating something that is attractive; useful and aesthetically appealing. Guru Ji sees

that aspect in creation, holding it in high esteem says:

“ਹਰਿ ਜੀਉ ਤੂੰ ਕਰਤਾ ਕਰਤਾਰੁ ॥” [SGGS: 54]

“*Harjeeau too(n) karataa karataar.*”

**Translation:** Dear Lord, You are the Creator and the Doer.

This place became a living laboratory for practice of Guru Ji's ideas on life of action and detachment, which he demonstrated by engaging actively in farming. It became a beacon of light, spreading its light all around. Here the seed of Sikh structured life style germinated and it became a template that is still followed by all the gurudwaras everywhere. Bhai Gurdas Ji has described Guru Ji's religious and spiritual endeavors in these words:

“ਬਾਣੀ ਮੁਖਹੁ ਉਚਾਰੀਐ ਹੁਇ ਰੁਸਨਾਈ ਮਿਟੈ ਅੰਧਾਰਾ। ਗਿਆਨੁ ਗੋਸਟਿ ਚਰਚਾ ਸਦਾ ਅਨਹਦਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਉਠੈ ਧੁਨਕਾਰਾ। ਸੋਦਰੁ ਆਰਤੀ ਗਾਵੀਐ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਜਾਪੁ ਉਚਾਰਾ। ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਭਾਰਿ ਅਥਰਬਣਿ ਤਾਰਾ ॥੩੮॥”

“*Baanee mukhahu uchaareeaaai, hoye rusanaiee miTai andharaa. Geyaan gosat charachaa sadhaa, anahadh sabadh uthay dhunakaaraa. Sodhar aaratee gaaveeaaai amrit vele jaap auchaaraa. Guramukh bhaar atharaban taaraa.* 38.” [Bhai Gurdas Vaar 1.38]

**Translation:** When Baba uttered hymns, the light would spread and darkness of ignorance dispelled. Discussions (exchange of ideas) for understanding of knowledge and the melodies of unstruck sound were ever heard there. Sodar and Arati were sung (in the evenings) and in the ambrosial hours Japu was recited. The Gurmukh (Nanak) saved the people from the clutches of tantra, mantra and Atharvaveda.

The magical transformation of the souls was taking



place. Even the water, soil and air were being permeated, fortified and enriched by the Gurbani being recited and sung daily. The ambience, life style and the nature helped the residents to experience a state of bliss. The transformation brought and how his eminence spread by Guru Ji is again captured by Bhai Gurdas Ji in these words:

“ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਵਾਈ ਦਿਹਿ ਦਿਹੀ ਕਲਿਜੁਗਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਆ ।”

“*ChaRhe savaiee dehe dhihee kalijug Nanak Naam dhiaaiaa.*” (Bhai Gurdas Vaar 1.45)

**Translation:** His eminence increased by leaps and bounds and he made people of *Kaliyuga* mediate on *Naam*.

This is also the place where Bhai Lehna came and met Guru Ji for the first time in 1532. He was leading a group on a pilgrimage trip to Vaishno Devi. Parting company with his group, he came to visit Guru Ji. The meeting with Guru Ji, experience of ecstasy made him stay there, as he realized this was what his Soul was searching for. Bhai Lehna spent seven years here, and in the process, he Was transformed by Guru Ji. During his last days, Guru Ji named him Guru Angad which means “part of me” and anointed him as his successor, and bowed before him. Such an act of successor steeped in humility was unheard of. Bhai Gurdas has captured the essence of this transformation process in these words:

ਥਾਪਿਆ ਲਹਿਣਾ ਜੀਵਦੇ ਗੁਰਆਈ ਸਿਰਿ ਛਤ੍ਰੁ ਫਿਰਾਇਆ ।

ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਕੈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਵਟਾਇਆ ।”

“*Thaapiaa lehnaa jeevadhe, guriaaiee sirr chhatr firaiaa. Jotee jot milai kai, satigur Nanak roop vaTaiaa.*”

[Bhai Gurdas Vaar 1, 45]

**Translation:** During his life time he waved the canopy of Guruship on the head of Lehna (Guru Angad) and merged his own light into him. Guru Nanak now transformed himself (into Guru Angad).

Kartarpur, the site of first Sikh seminary was parted from us with the partition of the nation in 1947, but it never left our desire to visit it and was made integral part of our prayer. With the corridor opening in November 2019, Guru Ji is answering our collective daily prayers "Ardas" of over seventy years. Now, we have the opportunity to do our part and visit this shrine to renew and reaffirm our commitment to the life style Guru Ji espoused and practiced from this place. There is no need of any fear in making this journey based on the media hysteria. Anybody from any part of the world can visit there, to get the divine experience and be fulfilled and thankful.

*(The Sikh Review, February 2020)*

# India's Debt To Guru Nanak

## Prof. Pritam Singh



Guru Nanak's containment in the popular Indian mind as the Guru of one community—the Sikhs—has been responsible for the lack of proper appreciation of the great debt that the Indian nation, as a whole, owes him.

If someone were to analyse the tributes paid every year to Guru Nanak by leaders of the Indian Public, one is likely to discover that they all talk of a quietist saint, who preached fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man, just like all other saints.

More often than not, such tributes sound hollow because the adulatory epithets used in them are almost always the same, whether the subject be Kabir, Jambhoji Maharaj or Arunagirinather or Nanak.

The same stock treatment is meted out to Guru Nanak by the painters, who visualize him, usually, as a saint who looks like he is refusing to open his eyes to the world around him.



Agreed, that in the absence of any authentic contemporary portraits, the image of Guru Nanak to be painted by our artists has to be imaginary. But if draw they must, is it necessary that instead of drawing the Guru's contours on the basis of impression gathered from the study of his own compositions and near-contemporary literature or even from his impact on the subsequent history of India, his personality be forced to approximate itself to the artist's arbitrary view of what a traditional Indian saint should look like?

Whether old or modern, such stock paintings have never impressed me and shall I hope, never impressed discerning people, because they have no resemblance to the real personality which they claim to portray.

It is my firm belief that Guru Nanak, as he emerges from his poetic work or from the imprints that he has left on the post-Nanakian history, is a class by himself and not just another saints among a host of medieval saints and social reformers.

On merit, therefore he deserves to be treated as an independent historical phenomenon, like the Buddha.

Guru Nanak's claim to uniqueness lies firstly, in his clinical findings relating to the ailment from which medieval human material in India suffered and secondly, in the recipe which he prepared to restore the patient's health and to bring about complete rejuvenation.

The ailment, according to the Guru's diagnosis, was that man, for getting his divine descent, had come to accept his wretchedness as inevitable and unalterable.

Other medieval saints should have suggested

that in order to make man's insufferable wretchedness sufferable, heavy doses of deterministic devotional submissiveness be administered, till the moral responses of the patient to the world around him get completely dulled.

Guru Nanak's method, on the other hand, was to restore normalcy to all men's faculties, so that he could react to give situations as a sane, normal, healthy person and if he found it necessary, might change them to his advantage rather than go on accepting them as inexorable.

The recipe which he prescribed had, besides other ingredients, three unusual ones:

- 1) Honour
- 2) Social commitment
- 3) Organization

*"O, my mind, you must know your real origin:  
You are divine light incarnate".*

(P. 441, Guru Granth Sahib)

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥

ਮਨ ਹਰਿ ਜੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਨਾਲਿ ਹੈ ਗੁਰਮਤੀ ਰੰਗ ਮਾਣੁ ॥

With such faith in the divinity of man, it was natural for the Guru to equate self-respect with life itself. He has left it on record that "life at the cost of one's honour is not worth living".

(P. 142, Guru Granth Sahib)

ਸੋ ਜੀਵਿਆ ਜਿਸੁ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਵੈ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜੀਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਬੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥.....(ਮ: ੧ ਸਲੋਕ)

His concern with a 'Patt' i.e. honour, was so great that we find this word occurring almost on.

Refreshingly surprising is his extension of the concept of personal honour to the honour of his country.

He showers abuses on the ruling house of Lodis, when he refers to the humiliation suffered by Indian at the hands of Babar's hordes, because they (the Lodis) had failed to modernized India's defences in time. ("While the Lodis marshaled their elephants, the Mugahals opened their attack with canons.")

(P. 418, Guru Granth Sahib)

ਮੁਗਲ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਭਈ ਲੜਾਈ ਰਣ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਗ ਵਗਾਈ ॥

ਓਨੀ ਤੁਪਕ ਤਾਣਿ ਚਲਾਈ ਓਨੀ ਹਸਤ ਚਿੜਾਈ ॥

ਜਿਨ੍ਹ ਕੀ ਚੀਰੀ ਦਰਗਹ ਪਾਟੀ ਤਿਨਾ ਮਰਣਾ ਭਾਈ ॥ (੪੧੮)

Undoubtedly, the whole Cosmic Drama was being staged by the Central Cosmic Will, but the Guru took pains to press home the point that there was enough scope for free initiative, noble or ignoble.

All activity that tended to confine the area of man's freedom to the satiation of sensual requirements only, ultimately led to moral and spiritual destruction and eternal damnation. On the other hand, all efforts to outgrow selfishness by engaging oneself in social welfare, so as to make life worth living everywhere and for everybody with voluntary and hard cooperative labour, would lead man to the path of moral and spiritual upliftment.

Social commitment, naturally, led to the organization of like-minded persons into well-knit sangats—local bodies—at the grass root level.



The administration of the Guru's medicine made all the difference in restoring India's socio-political health.

Anyone who cares to study the evolution of the local Sikh congregations into the fighting Dals of the Khalsa Panth and the substitution of the baptism of Sikh pahul by the Singh Amrit, resulting in the complete destruction of the grand Mugal Empire, will testify to the efficacy of Guru Nanak's prescription.

It may not be possible to say exactly what course Indian history would have taken, had Guru Nanak not appeared on the scene, but the tremendous difference, between the Pre-Nanakian, 'Why should I bother?' individualistic and cynic attitude of the Indian people towards such situations as involved the honour of womenfolk and the freedom of the country, and the post-Nanakian attitude of commitment, exhibited by his followers, cannot just be overlooked.

If a physically strong person were to hit down another equally strong person, I would not mind it all, but if a powerful lion were to pounce upon a herd of cows.....(P. 360, Guru Granth Sahib) well, that is a scene which should evoke a qualitatively different response from the onlooker. Such was the lesson that Guru Nanak's follower were taught to heed and that made all the difference.

The difference was absolutely clear to the perceptive mind of Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal the philosopher of the East, when he bemoaned in no uncertain terms, that the triumphant march of Islam

would have proceeded unhampered in India, but for the intervention of the Khalsa "who took away the sword and the Quran with the result that Islam met its death in the Punjab."

(P. 183, Javed Namah)

If I do not know how to stand up manfully against injustice and oppression and somebody teaches me to do so, his contribution towards my build up, would be unforgettable, at least for me.

This is exactly what Guru Nanak did for the whole of India. He tried to change Indian man's psychology, he trained the Indian mind's instinctive reactions not to behave indifferently in situations involving honour. In fact, he metamorphosed the very springs of Indian thought. If at all, he is the real source of the inspiration to which India owes its freedom.

Does then Guru Nanak deserve to be lumped together with other medieval saints as just one of them, to be painted with eyes permanently half-closed?

*From the "Sikh Review" Nov. 1983*

# PINGALWARA DIARY

(UPTO March, 2020)

Services rendered by Pingalwara Institution for the service of the suffering humanity are:-

## 1. Homes for the Homeless

There are 1792 patients in different branches of Pingalwara now a days:-

(a) Head Office, Mata Mehtab Kaur Ward,	
Bhai Piara Singh Ward	349 Patients
(b) Manawala Complex	851 Patients
(c) Pandori Warrach Branch, Amritsar	100 Patients
(d) Jalandhar Branch	39 Patients
(e) Sangrur Branch	247 Patients
(f) Chandigarh (Palsora ) Branch	120 Patients
(g) Goindwal Branch	86 Patients

**Total 1792 Patients**

The number of patients suffering from various diseases are as follows:

Disease	Number	Disease	Number
1. Mental Patients	320	9. Aids Patients	21
2. Paralysis, Polio	164	10. Epilepsy Cases	199
3. Mentally Retarded	475	11. Cancer Patients	03
4. Deaf and Dumb	193	12. Diabetes	100
5. Old Aged	123	13. School going Children	81
6. Injured	19	14. Abandoned Children	04
7. T. B. Patients	22	15. Recovered	31
8. Blind	37	<b><u>Total 1792</u></b>	

## 2. Treatment facilities

(a) **Dispensary & Laboratory:-** Pingalwara has a dispensary and a laboratory for the treatment of patients. It has an annual expenditure of about



1 Crore 30 lakhs.

- (b) **Medical Care Staff:-** Experienced medical staff like Nurses, Pharmacists and Laboratory Technicians are available for the care of the Pingalwara residents.
- (c) **Blood-Donation Camps:-** A Blood Donation Camp is organized on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary every year. The blood is used for Pingalwara residents and road accident victims.
- (d) **Ambulances:-** Ambulances with basic Medical aid are available for victims of road accidents on G.T. Road, round the clock and provide facilities for taking Pingalwara patients to the hospital.
- (e) **Artificial Limb Centre:-** There is an Artificial Limb Centre at Manawala Complex, dedicated to the memory of Bhagat Ji which provides free of cost Artificial Limbs to amputee cases and calipers to paraplegic, hemiplegic or polio affected people. 13668 needy people have benefitted till December 2019.
- (f) **Physiotherapy Centre:-** A Physiotherapy Centre equipped with State-of-the-art equipment is functioning in the Manawala Complex since June 2005. On an average 90-100 patients are treated everyday.
- (g) **Operation Theatres:-** There is a well equipped Operation Theatre at Manawala Branch of Pingalwara for general surgery, Micro Surgery where Cochlear Implants and major operations are carried out.
- (h) **Dental, Eye & Ear Centres:-** These Centres have been set up to provide these services to Pingalwara residents, sewadars and their families.

### 3. Education:

Pingalwara Society is running Educational Institutions for the poor and needy children.

- (a) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Manawala Complex, Amritsar:-** This school provides free education to 768 students from the poor and deprived sections of the society. They are provided with free books and uniforms. Children being brought up by Pingalwara Society are also studying in this school.
- (b) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Manawala Complex, Amritsar :-** This school is providing Special Education to 210 Special children.
- (c) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf, Manawala Complex, Amritsar:-** Bhagat Puran Singh School for Deaf Children is functional at the Manawala Complex since May 2005. The school is equipped with state-of-the-art training aid and has 210 children on its rolls.
- (d) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Needs Manawala Complex Amritsar:** Under RCI two Diploma courses are running.
  - (i) Diploma Special Education (Hearing Impairment)  
25 Seats.
  - (ii) Diploma Special Education (Mental Retardation)  
25 Seats.
- (e) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for the Deaf, Attari, Amritsar:-** 13 Students are taking education under the guidance of well qualified staff.
- (f) **Bhagat Puran Singh Adarsh School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian), Distt. Gurdaspur:-** This school is dedicated to the sweet memory of Bhagatji. 436

students are getting free education under the able guidance of well qualified teachers. The school also provides financial help to students who have finished their school studies and are aspiring for higher studies.

- (g) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Buttar Kalan (Qadian), Distt. Gurdaspur:-** 11 Students are taking education under the guidance of well qualified staff.
- (h) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Katora, Firozpur:-** This School is running since 2016 in which 17 Students are studying.
- (i) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Sarhali, Tarn Taran:** 11 Students are taking education in this school.
- (j) **Bhagat Puran Singh Deaf School, Village Kakkon, Hoshiarpur:-** 9 Students are studying in this school.
- (k) **Bhagat Puran Singh School for Special Education, Chandigarh (Palsora):-** This school caters to the needs of Special adults of the branch and has 40 students.
- (l) **Vocational Centre:-** This Centre is providing free training in embroidery, stitching, craft work, making washing powder, candle making and painting, etc. Young girls from the villages of surroundings areas are the main beneficiaries.
- (m) **Computer Training:-** Computers are available in all the schools for academic and vocational training.
- (n) **Hostel facilities:-** There are separate hostels for boys and girls in Manawala Complex. Many girls are pursuing higher studies in different colleges.



#### 4. Rehabilitation:

**Marriages:-** After being educated, boys and girls at Pingalwara are married to suitable partners. 46 girls and 4 boys have been married off till date.

#### 5. Environment Related Activities:

(a) **Tree Plantation:-** Bhagat Puran Singh Ji was deeply concerned about the degradation of the environment. A vigorous campaign of tree plantation is started every year on Bhagat Ji's Death Anniversary. Each year trees are planted in various schools, colleges, hospitals, cremation grounds and other public places. These include Amaltas, Kachnar, Behra, Champa, Arjun, Sukhchain, Chandni, Zetropa, and Kari-patta, etc. These are distributed to different institutions.

(b) **Nursery:-** Pingalwara has its own Nursery where saplings of various plants and trees are prepared. Every year, the aim of nursery is to grow more than 54 different kinds of saplings.

#### 6. Social Improvement Related Activities:

(a) **Awareness:-** Pingalwara has played an important role in spreading awareness about the evils in the society. This has been done by printing literature on religious, social and environmental issues at the Puran Printing Press, Amritsar and is being distributed free of cost. Annual expenditure of printing and publicity is about 1 crores 50 lakhs rupees.

(b) **Puran Printing Press:-** The Printing Press has been updated with an Offset Press.

(c) **Museum and Documentaries:-** A Museum, and a

number of documentaries have been prepared on Pingalwara activities as well as on zero budget natural farming. The C.D.s are freely available from Pingalwara.

A feature film produced by Pingalwara Society, Amritsar on 30 January, 2015 EH JANAM TUMHARE LEKHE (Punjabi) on Bhagat Puran Singh Ji, founder Pingalwara and his struggle not only for selfless services of wounded humanity but for Environment Crisis also, has proved a beacon for the generations yet to come after us.

#### **7. Help to the victims of Natural Calamities:**

Pingalwara makes an effort to provide succour to the victims of natural calamities like floods, earthquakes and famines. Aid was sent for the earth-quake victims in Iran, Tsunami disaster victims, Leh landslide and flood affected areas.

#### **8. Cremation of unclaimed dead-bodies:**

Pingalwara cremates unclaimed dead bodies with full honour.

#### **9. Dairy Farm:**

220 cows and buffalos at Manawala Complex and at Dhira ot Farm provide fresh milk to the Pingalwara residents.

#### **10. Old Age Homes:**

Old age homes at Sangrur and Manawala Complex of Pingalwara caters to the needs of elderly people.

11. **Expenditure:** The daily expenditure of Pingalwara is more than 6.5 lakhs.

### Other Details:

- a) All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is a Registered Society, registered by Registrar of Companies vide letter No. 130 of 1956-1957 as amended vide No. A-28/4540 dated 07-07-1998.
- b) All donations to Pingalwara are exempted under Section 80 G of Income Tax-II Amritsar letter No. CIT-II/ASR/ITO (Tech.)/2011-12/4730 dated 11/12 January, 2012.
- c) PAN Number of the All India Pingalwara Charitable Society is AAATA 2237R
- d) FCRA (Foreign Contribution Regulation Act) 1976 Registration No. of Pingalwara is 115210002

Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh

***Dr. Inderjit Kaur,***

***President,***

All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.),

Tehsilpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar. (Punjab).



- \* Preserve natural resources.
- \* Service of the poor and destitutes is the service of God.
- \* Plant trees to save environment.
- \* Wear Khadi clothes to lessen unemployment.
- \* Simple living and high thinking is a bliss.
- \* Use less of diesel and petrol.
- \* Exercise restraint in your living habits.
- \* Don't forget to plant trees. They are the sign of prosperity of a nation.

—Bhagat Puran Singh

K.M. Munshi writes that Matsya Purana says: "One who sinks a well lives in heaven for as many years as there are drops of water in it. But to dig ten such wells equals in merit the digging of one pond; digging of ten such ponds was equal to making a lake; making of ten lakes was as meritorious as be—getting a virtuous son but begetting ten such virtuous son had the same sanctity as that of planting a single tree."

# PINGALWARA BRANCHES

## **1. Head Office:-**

**All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.),  
Tehsilpura, G.T. Road, Amritsar.**

Tel. 91-0183-2584586, 2584713,

Chief Administrator:

Col. S. Darshan Singh Bawa (Retd.) M-98145-35937.

## **2. Manawala Complex:-**

8 km. from Amritsar. This Complex is located on the  
Jalandhar-Amritsar G. T. Road.

Administrator: S. Jai Singh M-97814-01142.

## **3. Pandori Warraich Branch:-**

9 km. from Amritsar on Amritsar-Majitha Road

Branch Incharge : Smt. Gurdarsh Kaur.

Ph. 91-0183-2573564, 97814-01164.

## **4. Goindwal Branch:-**

Tarn Taran Road, Near Main Gurdwara Bauli Sahib, Goindwal.

Branch Incharge: Bibi Baljinderjit Kaur.

Ph. 91-0183-222798, 97814-01170.

CP214755877IN

Counter No:1, 31/01/2020, 11:15

S. Tarlo

Add

Amr:24.00(Cash)Wt:1530gms

From:KIDE MARKET S.O (143001)

From:Amritsar PSE CRE LIR Hub

Makhdodas Hub

Incharge. S. Bal 9814535937



## **7. Chandigarh Branch:-**

Village Palsora, Chandigarh (U.T.) 1660055.

Hony. Administrator : Bibi Kuljit Kaur.

Ph. 0172-2693850, 2697625, 98140-79438

## **8. Ludhiana Pingalwara office:-**

84-South Model Gram, Ludhiana.

Ph. 91-0161-2429309, M-97814-01166



## *Appeal*

**Sewak kau sewa ban ayee ||  
Hukam boojh parm pad payee ||**

In the healthy environment of Gurdwara Dehra Sahib Lahore and in the light of the teachings of Gurbani, the work of selfless service which was started by Bhagat Puran Singh Ji at Lahore was implemented after arriving at Amritsar. After partition, on reaching Amritsar, Bhagat Puran Singh started the service of suffering humanity with full vigour. After this, he never looked back. For giving the present shape to the Pingalwara, its founder had to struggle very hard.

Presently in the year 2018, Pingalwara has over 1712 inmates which are being looked after without any discrimination of religion, caste, creed or colour. They include destitute, cripples, sick and insane men, women, children and the aged. Some of them are suffering from incurable diseases.

In addition to this, a lot of literature is printed and distributed free of cost, free education is given to the poor children, free artificial limbs are provided to the handicapped, and to save and improve the environment, free tree plantation is done in government and common land.

The daily expenditure of Pingalwara is over Rs. 6,50,000/ (Six Lacs Fifty Thousand only) which is being incurred out of the donations and help received from the donors and well-wishers.

From 2006, it has been decided by All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.), Amritsar that no one on behalf of Pingalwara will collect any donation by carrying Donation Boxes in Trains/Buses, in the Streets/Bazars or Houses. Similarly no person from Pingalwara is sent to villages or Mandis for collection of wheat or any other produce/Ration items. All are requested to be careful from such people and give donation only to authorized Pingalwara Sewadars after obtaining official receipt.

Donors are humbly requested to send donations through money-orders, bank drafts, cheques etc., so that the good work of selfless service is kept going.

**Dr. Inderjit Kaur, President,**  
All India Pingalwara Charitable Society (Regd.) Amritsar.